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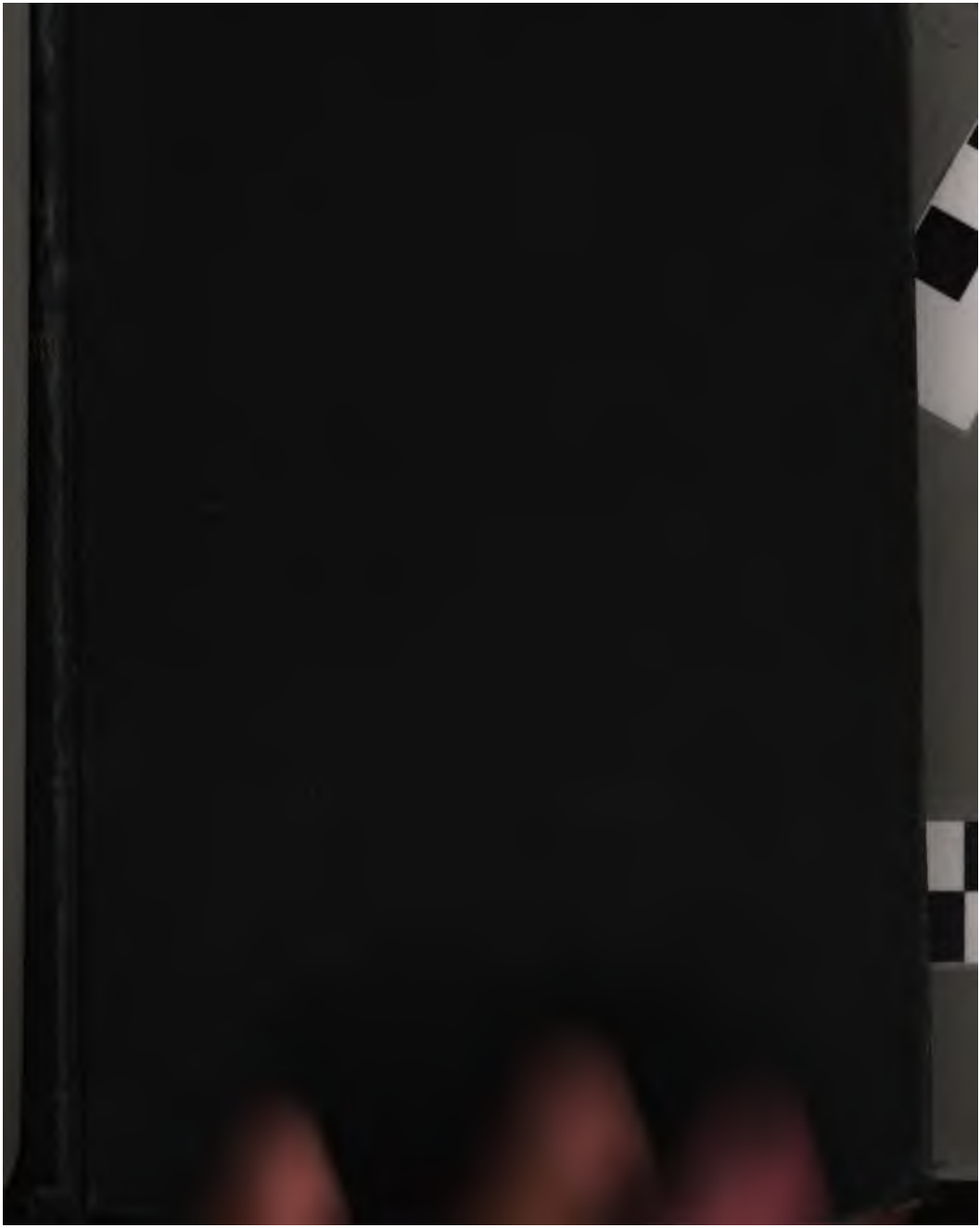

LELAND·STANFORD·JVNIOR·VNIVERSITY

THE MELTING-POT

DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS

BY

ISRAEL ZANGWILL

AUTHOR OF "CHILDREN OF THE GHETTO," "MERELY MARY ANN," ETC., ETC.

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To

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

IN RESPECTFUL RECOGNITION OF HIS STRENUOUS STRUGGLE

AGAINST THE FORCES THAT THREATEN TO SHIPWRECK

THE GREAT REPUBLIC

WHICH CARRIES MANKIND AND ITS FORTUNES,

THIS PLAY IS, BY HIS KIND PERMISSION,

CORDIALLY DEDICATED

NOTE

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THE CAST

[As first produced at the Columbia Theatre, Washington, on the fifth of October, 1908]

DAVID QUIXANO . . . . . Walker Whiteside

MENDEL QUIXANO . . . . . Henry Bergman

BARON REVENDAL . . . . . John Blair

QUINCY DAVENPORT, JR. . . . . Grant Stewart

HERR PAPPELMEISTER . . . . . Henry Vogel

VERA REVENDAL . . . . . Chrystal Herne

BARONESS REVENDAL . . . . . Leonora Von Ottinger

FRAU QUIXANO . . . . . Louise Muldener

KATHLEEN O'REILLY . . . . . Mollie Revel

ACT I

[*The scene is laid in the living-room of the small home of the* QUIXANOS *in the Richmond or non-Jewish borough of New York, about five o'clock of a February afternoon. At centre back is a double street-door giving on a columned veranda in the Colonial style. Nailed on the right-hand door-post gleams a* Mezuzah, *a small metal case, containing a Biblical passage. On the right of the door is a small hat-stand holding* MENDEL'S *overcoat, umbrella, etc. There are two windows, one on either side of the door, and three other exits, one down-stage on the left leading to the stairs and family bedrooms, two on the right, the upper leading to* KATHLEEN'S *bedroom, and the lower to the kitchen. Over the street-door is pinned the Stars and Stripes. On the left wall, in the upper corner of which is a music-stand, are bookshelves of large mouldering Hebrew books, and over them is hung a* Mizrach, *or Hebrew picture, to show it is the East Wall. Other pictures round the room include Wagner, Columbus, Lincoln, and "Jews at the Wailing Place." Down-stage, about a yard from the left wall, stands* DAVID'S *roll-desk, open and displaying a medley of music, a quill pen, etc. On the wall behind the desk hangs a book-rack with brightly bound English books. A grand piano stands at left centre back, holding a pile of music and one huge Hebrew tome. There is a table in the middle of the room covered with a red cloth and a litter of objects, music, and newspapers. The fireplace, in which a fire is burning, occupies the centre of the right*

wall, and by it stands an armchair on which lies another heavy mouldy Hebrew tome. The mantel holds a clock, two silver candlesticks, etc. A chiffonier stands against the back wall on the right. There are a few cheap chairs. The whole effect is a curious blend of shabbiness, Americanism, Jewishness, and music, all four being combined in the figure of MENDEL QUIXANO, *who, in a black skull-cap, a seedy velvet jacket, and red carpet-slippers, is discovered standing at the open street-door. He is an elderly music master with a fine Jewish face, pathetically furrowed by misfortunes, and a short grizzled beard.*]

MENDEL

Good-bye, Johnny! . . . And don't forget to practise your scales.

[*Shutting door, shivers.*]

Ugh! It'll snow again, I guess.

[*He yawns, heaves great sigh of relief, walks toward the table, and perceives a music-roll.*]

The chump! He's forgotten his music!

[*He picks it up and runs toward the window on the left, muttering furiously.*]

Brainless, earless, thumb-fingered Gentile!

[*Throwing open the window.*]

Here, Johnny! You can't practise your scales if you leave 'em here!

[*He throws out the music-roll and shivers again at the cold as he shuts the window.*]

Ugh! And I must go out to that miserable dancing class to scrape the rent together.

[*He goes to the fire and warms his hands.*]

Ach Gott! What a life! What a life!

[*He drops dejectedly into the armchair. Finding himself sitting uncomfortably on the big book, he half rises and pushes it to the side of the seat. After an instant an irate Irish voice is heard from behind the kitchen door.*]

KATHLEEN

[*Without.*]

Divil take the butther! I wouldn't put up with ye, not for a hundred dollars a week.

MENDEL

[*Raising himself to listen, heaves great sigh.*]

Ach! Mother and Kathleen again!

KATHLEEN

[*Still louder.*]

Pots and pans and plates and knives. Sure 'tis enough to make a saint chrazy.

FRAU QUIXANO

[*Equally loudly from kitchen.*]

Wos schreist du? Gott in Himmel, dieses America!

KATHLEEN

[*Opening door of kitchen toward the end of* FRAU QUIXANO'S *speech, but turning back, with her hand visible on the door.*]

What's that ye're afther jabberin' about America? If ye don't like God's own counthry, sure ye can go back to your own Jerusalem, so ye can.

MENDEL

One's very servants are anti-Semites.

KATHLEEN

[*Banging door as she enters excitedly, carrying a folded white table-cloth. She is a pretty Irish maid of all work.*]

Bad luck to me, if iver I take sarvice again with haythen Jews.

[*She perceives* MENDEL *huddled up on the armchair, gives a little scream, and drops the cloth.*]

Och, I thought ye was out!

MENDEL

[*Rising.*]

And so you dared to be rude to my mother.

KATHLEEN

[*Angrily, as she picks up the cloth.*]

She said I put mate on a butther-plate.

MENDEL

Well, you know that's against her religion.

KATHLEEN

But I didn't do nothing of the soort. I ounly put butther on a mate-plate.

MENDEL

That's just as bad. What the Bible forbids—

KATHLEEN

[*Lays the cloth on a chair and vigorously clears off the litter of things on the table.*]

Sure, the Pope himself couldn't remimber it all. Why don't ye have a sinsible religion?

MENDEL

You are impertinent. Attend to your work.

[*He seats himself at the piano.*]

KATHLEEN

And isn't it laying the Sabbath cloth I am?

[*She bangs down articles from the table into their right places.*]

MENDEL

Don't answer me back.

[*He begins to play softly.*]

KATHLEEN

Faith, I must answer *somebody* back—and sorra a word of English *she* understands. I might as well talk to a tree.

MENDEL

You are not paid to talk, but to work.

[*Playing on softly.*]

KATHLEEN

And who *can* work with an ould woman naggin' and grizzlin' — ?

[*She removes the red table-cloth.*]

Mate-plates, butther-plates, *kosher*, *trepha*, sure I've smashed up folks' crockery and had less fuss made ouver it.

MENDEL

[*Stops playing.*]

Breaking crockery is one thing, and breaking a religion another. Didn't you tell me when I engaged you that you had lived in other Jewish families?

KATHLEEN

[*Angrily.*]

And is it a liar ye'd make me out now? I've lived wid clothiers and pawnbrokers and Vaudeville actors, but I niver shtruck a house where mate and butther couldn't be as paceable on the same plate as eggs and bacon — the most was that some wouldn't ate the bacon onless 'twas killed *kosher*.

MENDEL

[*Tickled.*]

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

KATHLEEN

[*Furious, pauses with the white table-cloth half on.*]

And who's ye laughin' at? I give ye a week's notice. I won't be made fun of by Jews, no, begorra, that I won't.

[*She pulls the cloth on viciously.*]

MENDEL

[*Sobered, rising from the piano.*]

Don't talk nonsense, Kathleen. Nobody is making fun of you. Have a little patience — you'll soon learn our ways.

KATHLEEN

[*More mildly.*]

Whose ways, yours or the ould lady's or Mr. David's? To-night being yer Sabbath, *you'll* be blowing out yer bedroom candle, though ye won't light it; Mr. David'll light his and blow it out too; and the misthress won't even touch the candleshtick. There's three religions in this house, not wan.

MENDEL

[*Coughs uneasily.*]

Hem! Well, you learn the mistress's ways — that will be enough.

KATHLEEN

[*Going to mantelpiece.*]

But how can I understand her jabberin' and jibberin'? — I'm not a monkey!

[*She takes up a silver candlestick.*]

Why doesn't she talk English like a Christian?

MENDEL

[*Irritated.*]

If you are going on like that, perhaps you had better *not* remain here.

KATHLEEN

[*Blazing up, forgetting to take the second candlestick.*]

And who's axin' ye to remain here? Faith, I'll lave this blissid minit!

MENDEL

[*Taken aback.*]

No, you can't do that.

KATHLEEN

And why can't I? Ye can keep yer dirthy wages.

[*She dumps down the candlestick violently on the table, and exit hysterically into her bedroom.*]

MENDEL

[*Sighing heavily.*]

She might have put on the other candlestick.

[*He goes to mantel and takes it. A rat-tat-tat at street-door.*]

Who can that be?

[*Running to* KATHLEEN'S *door, holding candlestick forgetfully low.*]

Kathleen! There's a visitor!

KATHLEEN

[*Angrily from within.*]

I'm not here!

MENDEL

So long as you're in this house, you must do your work.

[KATHLEEN'S *head emerges sulkily.*]

KATHLEEN

I tould ye I was lavin' at wanst. Open the door yerself.

MENDEL

I'm not dressed to receive visitors — it may be a new pupil.

[*He goes toward staircase, automatically carrying off the candlestick which* KATHLEEN *has not caught sight of. Exit on the left.*]

KATHLEEN

[*Moving toward the street-door.*]

The divil fly away wid me if iver I set foot again among haythen furriners —

[*She throws open the door angrily and then the outer door.* VERA REVENDAL, *a beautiful girl in furs and muff, with a touch of the exotic in her appearance, steps into the little vestibule.*]

VERA

Is Mr. Quixano at home?

KATHLEEN

[*Sulkily.*]

Which Mr. Quixano?

VERA

[*Surprised.*]

Are there two Mr. Quixanos?

KATHLEEN

[*Tartly.*]

Didn't I say there was?

VERA

Then I want the one who plays.

KATHLEEN

There isn't a one who plays.

VERA

Oh, surely!

KATHLEEN

Ye're wrong entirely. They both plays.

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

Oh, dear! And I suppose they both play the violin.

KATHLEEN

Ye're wrong again. One plays the piano — ounly the young ginthleman plays the fiddle — Mr. David!

VERA

[*Eagerly.*]

Ah, Mr. David — that's the one I want to see.

KATHLEEN

He's out.

[*She abruptly shuts the door.*]

VERA

[*Stopping its closing.*]

Don't shut the door!

KATHLEEN

[*Snappily.*]

More chance of seeing him out there than in here!

VERA

But I want to leave a message.

KATHLEEN

Then why don't ye come inside? It's freezin' me to the bone.

[*She sneezes.*]

Atchoo!

VERA

I'm sorry.

[*She comes in and closes the door.*]

Will you please say Miss Revendal called from the Settlement, and we are anxiously awaiting his answer to the letter asking him to play for us on —

KATHLEEN

How can I tell him all that? I'm not here.

VERA

Eh?

KATHLEEN

I'm lavin'—just as soon as I've packed me thrunk.

VERA

Then I must *write* the message—can I write at this desk?

KATHLEEN

If the ould woman don't come in and shpy you.

VERA

What old woman?

KATHLEEN

Ould Mr. Quixano's mother—she wears a black wig, she's that houly.

VERA

[*Bewildered.*]

What? . . . But why should she mind my writing?

KATHLEEN

Look at the clock.

[VERA *looks at the clock, more puzzled than ever.*]

If ye're not quick, it'll be *Shabbos.*

VERA

Be what?

KATHLEEN

[*Holds up hands of horror.*]

Ye don't know what *Shabbos* is! A Jewess not know her own Sunday!

VERA

[*Outraged.*]

I, a Jewess! How dare you?

KATHLEEN

[*Flustered.*]

Axin' your pardon, miss, but ye looked a bit furrin and I —

VERA

[*Frozen.*]

I am a Russian.

[*Slowly and dazedly.*]

Do I understand that Mr. Quixano is a Jew?

KATHLEEN

Two Jews, miss. Both of 'em.

VERA

Oh, but it is impossible.

[*Dazedly to herself.*]

He had such charming manners.

[*Aloud again.*]

You seem to think everybody Jewish. Are you sure Mr. Quixano is not Spanish? — the name sounds Spanish.

KATHLEEN

Shpanish!

[*She picks up the old Hebrew book on the armchair.*]

Look at the ould lady's book. Is that Shpanish?

[*She points to the Mizrach.*]

And that houly picture that the ould lady says her paternoster to! Is that Shpanish? And that houly table-cloth with the houly silver candle —

[*Cry of sudden astonishment.*]

Why, I've ounly put —

[*She looks toward mantel and utters a great cry of alarm as she drops the Hebrew book on the floor.*]

Why, where's the other candleshtick! Mother in hivin, they'll say I shtole the candleshtick!

[*Perceiving that* VERA *is dazedly moving toward door.*]

Beggin' your pardon, miss, —

[*She is about to move a chair toward the desk.*]

VERA

Thank you, I've changed my mind.

KATHLEEN

That's more than I'll do.

VERA

[*Hand on door.*]

Don't say I called at all.

KATHLEEN

Plaze yerself. Phwat name did ye say?

[MENDEL *enters hastily from his bedroom, completely transmogrified, minus the skull-cap, with a Prince Albert coat, and boots instead of slippers, so that his appearance is gentlemanly.* KATHLEEN *begins to search quietly and unostentatiously in the table-drawers, the chiffonier, etc., etc., for the candlestick.*]

MENDEL

I am sorry if I have kept you waiting —

[*He rubs his hands importantly.*]

You see I have so many pupils already. Won't you sit down?

[*He indicates a chair.*]

VERA

[*Flushing, embarrassed, releasing her hold of the door handle.*]

Thank you — I — I — I didn't come about pianoforte lessons.

MENDEL

[*Sighing in disappointment.*]

Ach!

VERA

In fact I — er — it wasn't you I wanted at all — I was just going.

MENDEL

[*Politely.*]

Perhaps I can direct you to the house you are looking for.

VERA

Thank you, I won't trouble you.

[*She turns toward the door again.*]

MENDEL

Allow me!

[*He opens the door for her.*]

VERA

[*Hesitating, struck by his manners, struggling with her anti-Jewish prejudice.*]

It — it — was your son I wanted.

MENDEL

[*His face lighting up.*]

You mean my nephew, David. Yes, *he* gives violin lessons.

[*He closes the door.*]

VERA

Oh, is he your nephew?

MENDEL

I am sorry he is out — he, too, has so many pupils, though at the moment he is only at the Crippled Children's Home — playing to them.

VERA

How lovely of him!

[*Touched and deciding to conquer her prejudice.*]

But that's just what *I* came about — I mean we'd like him to play again at our Settlement. Please ask him why he hasn't answered Miss Andrews's letter.

MENDEL

[*Astonished.*]

He hasn't answered your letter?

VERA

Oh, I'm not Miss Andrews; I'm only her assistant.

MENDEL

I see — Kathleen, whatever are you doing under the table?

[KATHLEEN, *in her hunting around for the candlestick, is now stooping and lifting up the table-cloth.*]

KATHLEEN

Sure the fiend has witched away the candleshtick.

MENDEL

[*Embarrassed.*]

The candlestick? Oh — I — I think you'll find it in my bedroom.

KATHLEEN

Wisha, now!

[*She goes into his bedroom.*]

MENDEL

[*Turning apologetically to* VERA.]

I beg your pardon, Miss Andrews, I mean Miss — er —

VERA

Revendal.

MENDEL

[*Slightly more interested.*]

Revendal? Then you must be the Miss Revendal David told me about!

VERA

[*Blushing.*]

Why, he has only seen me once — the time he played at our Roof-Garden Concert.

MENDEL

Yes, but he was so impressed by the way you handled those new immigrants — the Spirit of the Settlement, he called you.

VERA

[*Modestly.*]

Ah, no — Miss Andrews is that. And you will tell him to answer her letter at once, won't you, because there's only a week now to our Concert.

[*A gust of wind shakes the windows. She smiles.*]

Naturally it will *not* be on the Roof Garden.

MENDEL

[*Half to himself.*]

Fancy David not saying a word about it to me! Are you sure the letter was mailed?

VERA

I mailed it myself — a week ago. And even in New York —

[*She smiles. Re-enter* KATHLEEN *with the recovered candlestick.*]

KATHLEEN

Bedad, ye're as great a shleep-walker as Mr. David!

[*She places the candlestick on the table and moves toward her bedroom.*]

MENDEL

Kathleen!

KATHLEEN

[*Pursuing her walk without turning.*]

I'm not here!

MENDEL

Did you take in a letter for Mr. David about a week ago?

[*Smiling at* MISS REVENDAL.]

He doesn't get many, you see.

KATHLEEN

[*Turning.*]

A letter? Sure, I took in ounly a postcard from Miss Johnson, telling him she —

VERA

And you don't remember a letter — a large letter — last Saturday — with the seal of our Settlement?

KATHLEEN

Last Saturday wid a seal, is it? Sure, how could I forgit it?

MENDEL

Then you *did* take it in?

KATHLEEN

Ye're wrong entirely. 'Twas the misthress took it in.

MENDEL

[*To* VERA.]

I am sorry the boy has been so rude.

KATHLEEN

But the misthress didn't give it him at wanst — she hid it away bekaz it was *Shabbos*.

MENDEL

Oh, dear — and she has forgotten to give it to him. Excuse me.

[*He makes a hurried exit to the kitchen.*]

KATHLEEN

And excuse *me* — I've me thrunk to pack.

[*She goes toward her bedroom, pauses at the door.*]

And ye'll witness I don't pack the candleshtick.

[*Emphatic exit.*]

VERA

[*Still dazed.*]

A Jew! That wonderful boy a Jew! . . . But then so was David the shepherd-youth with his harp and his psalms, the sweet singer in Israel.

[*She surveys the room and its contents with interest. The windows rattle once or twice in the rising wind. The light gets gradually less. She picks up the huge Hebrew tome on the piano and puts it down with a slight smile as if overwhelmed by the weight of alien antiquity. Then she goes over to the desk and picks up the printed music.*]

Mendelssohn's Concerto, Tartini's Sonata in G Minor, Bach's Chaconne, . . .

[*She looks up at the book-rack.*]

"History of the American Commonwealth," "Cyclopædia of History," "History of the Jews" — he seems very fond of history. Ah, there's Shelley and Tennyson.

[*With surprise.*]

Nietzsche next to the Bible? No Russian books apparently —

[*Re-enter* MENDEL *triumphantly with a large sealed letter.*]

MENDEL

Here it is! As it came on Saturday, my mother was afraid David would open it!

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

But what *can* you do with a letter except open it? Any more than with an oyster?

MENDEL

[*Smiling as he puts the letter on* DAVID'S *desk.*]

To a pious Jew letters and oysters are alike forbidden — at least letters may not be opened on our day of rest.

VERA

I'm sure I couldn't rest till I'd opened mine.

[*Enter from the kitchen* FRAU QUIXANO, *defending herself with excited gesticulation. She is an old lady with a black wig, but her appearance is dignified, venerable even, in no way comic. She speaks Yiddish exclusively, that being largely the language of the Russian Pale.*]

FRAU QUIXANO

Obber ich hob gesogt zu Kathleen —

MENDEL

[*Turning and going to her.*]

Yes, yes, mother, that's all right now.

FRAU QUIXANO

[*In horror, perceiving her Hebrew book on the floor, where* KATHLEEN *has dropped it.*]

Mein Buch!

[*She picks it up and kisses it piously.*]

MENDEL

[*Presses her into her fireside chair.*]

Ruhig, ruhig, Mutter!

[*To* VERA.]

She understands barely a word of English — she won't disturb us.

VERA

Oh, but I must be going — I was so long finding the house, and look! it has begun to snow!

[*They both turn their heads and look at the falling snow.*]

MENDEL

All the more reason to wait for David — it may leave off. He can't be long now. Do sit down.

[*He offers a chair.*]

FRAU QUIXANO

[*Looking round suspiciously.*]

Wos will die Shiksah?

VERA

What does your mother say?

MENDEL

[*Half-smiling.*]

Oh, only asking what your heathen ladyship desires.

VERA

Tell her I hope she is well.

MENDEL

Das Fräulein hofft dass es geht gut —

FRAU QUIXANO

[*Shrugging her shoulders in despairing astonishment.*]

Gut? Und wie soll es gut gehen — in Amerika!

[*She takes out her spectacles, and begins slowly polishing and adjusting them.*]

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

I understood that last word.

MENDEL

She asks how can anything possibly go well in America!

VERA

Ah, she doesn't like America.

MENDEL

[*Half-smiling.*]

Her favourite exclamation is "*A Klog zu Columbessen!*"

VERA

What does that mean?

MENDEL

Cursed be Columbus!

VERA

[*Laughingly.*]

Poor Columbus! I suppose she's just come over.

MENDEL

Oh, no, it must be ten years since I sent for her.

VERA

Really! But your nephew was born here?

MENDEL

No, he's Russian too. But please sit down, you had better get his answer at once.

[VERA *sits.*]

VERA

I suppose *you* taught him music.

MENDEL

I? I can't play the violin. He is self-taught. In the Russian Pale he was a wonder-child. Poor David! He always looked forward to coming to America; he imagined I was a famous musician over here. He found me conductor in a cheap theatre — a converted beer-hall.

VERA

Was he very disappointed?

MENDEL

Disappointed! He was enchanted. He is crazy about America.

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

Ah, *he* doesn't curse Columbus.

MENDEL

My mother came with her life behind her: David with his life before him. Poor boy!

VERA

Why do you say poor boy?

MENDEL

What is there before him here but a terrible struggle for life? If he doesn't curse Columbus, he'll curse fate. Music-lessons and dance-halls, beer-halls and

weddings — every hope and ambition will be ground out of him, and he will die obscure and unknown.

[*His head sinks on his breast.* FRAU QUIXANO *is heard faintly sobbing over her book. The sobbing continues throughout the scene.*]

VERA

[*Half rising.*]

You have made your mother cry.

MENDEL

Oh, no — she understood nothing. She always cries on the eve of the Sabbath.

VERA

[*Mystified, sinking back into her chair.*]

Always cries? Why?

MENDEL

[*Embarrassed.*]

Oh, well, a Christian wouldn't understand —

VERA

Yes I could — do tell me!

MENDEL

She knows that in this great grinding America, David and I must go out to earn our bread on Sabbath as on week-days. She never says a word to us but her heart is full of tears.

VERA

Poor old woman. It was wrong of us to ask your nephew to play at the Settlement for nothing.

MENDEL

[*Rising fiercely.*]

If you offer him a fee, he shall not play. Did you think I was begging of you?

VERA

I beg your pardon —

[*Smiles.*]

There, *I* am begging of *you*. Sit down, please.

MENDEL

[*Walking away to piano.*]

I ought not to have burdened you with our troubles — you are too young.

VERA

[*Pathetically.*]

I young? If you only knew how old I am!

MENDEL

You?

VERA

I left my youth in Russia — eternities ago.

MENDEL

You know our Russia!

[*He goes over to her and sits down.*]

VERA

Can't you see I'm a Russian, too?

[*With a faint tremulous smile.*]

I might even have been a Siberian had I stayed. But I escaped from my gaolers.

MENDEL

You were a Revolutionist!

VERA

Who can live in Russia and not be? So you see trouble and I are not such strangers.

MENDEL

Who would have thought it to look at you? Siberia, gaolers, revolutions!

[*Rising.*]

What terrible things life holds!

VERA

Yes, even in free America.

[FRAU QUIXANO'S *sobbing grows slightly louder.*]

MENDEL

That Settlement work must be full of tragedies.

VERA

Sometimes one sees nothing but the tragedy of things.

[*Looking toward the window.*]

The snow is getting thicker. How pitilessly it falls — like fate.

MENDEL

[*Following her gaze.*]

Yes, icy and inexorable.

[*The faint sobbing of* FRAU QUIXANO *over her book, which has been heard throughout the scene as a sort of musical accompaniment, has helped to work it up to a mood of intense sadness, intensified by the growing dusk, so that as the two now gaze at the falling snow, the atmosphere seems overbrooded with melancholy. There is a moment or two without dialogue, given over to the sobbing of* FRAU QUIXANO, *the roar of the wind shaking the windows, the quick falling of the snow. Suddenly a happy voice singing "My Country 'tis of Thee" is heard from without.*]

FRAU QUIXANO

[*Pricking up her ears, joyously.*]

Do ist Dovidel!

MENDEL

That's David!

[*He springs up.*]

VERA

[*Murmurs in relief.*]

Ah!

[*The whole atmosphere is changed to one of joyous expectation.* DAVID *is seen and heard passing the left window, still singing the national hymn, but it breaks off abruptly as he throws open the door and appears on the threshold, a buoyant snow-covered figure in a cloak and a broad-brimmed hat, carrying a violin case. He is a sunny, handsome youth of the finest Russo-Jewish type. He speaks with a slight German accent.*]

DAVID

Isn't it a beautiful world, uncle?

[*He closes the inner door.*]

Snow, the divine white snow —

[*Perceiving the visitor with amaze.*]

Miss Revendal here!

[*He removes his hat and looks at her with boyish reverence and wonder.*]

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

Don't look so surprised — I haven't fallen from heaven like the snow. Take off your wet things.

DAVID

Oh, it's nothing; it's dry snow.

[*He lays down his violin case and brushes off the snow from his cloak, which* MENDEL *takes from him and hangs on the rack, all without interrupting the dialogue.*]

If I had only known you were waiting —

VERA

I am glad you didn't — I wouldn't have had those poor little cripples cheated out of a moment of your music.

DAVID

Uncle has told you? Ah, it was bully! You should have seen the cripples waltzing with their crutches!

[*He has moved toward the old woman, and while he holds one hand to the blaze now pats her cheek with the other in greeting, to which she responds with a loving smile ere she settles contentedly to slumber over her book.*]

Es war grossartig, Mumme. Even the paralysed danced.

MENDEL

Don't exaggerate, David.

DAVID

Exaggerate, uncle! Why, if they hadn't the use of their legs, their arms danced on the counterpane; if their arms couldn't dance, their hands danced from the wrist; and if their hands couldn't dance, they danced with their fingers; and if their fingers couldn't dance, their heads danced; and if their heads were paralysed, why, their eyes danced — God never curses so utterly but you've *something* left to dance with!

[*He moves toward his desk.*]

VERA

[*Infected with his gaiety.*]

You'll tell us next the beds danced.

DAVID

So they did — they shook their legs like mad!

VERA

Oh, why wasn't I there?

[*His eyes meet hers at the thought of her presence.*]

DAVID

Dear little cripples, I felt as if I could play them all straight again with the love and joy jumping out of this old fiddle.

[*He lays his hand caressingly on the violin.*]

MENDEL

[*Gloomily.*]

But in reality you left them as crooked as ever.

DAVID

No, I didn't.

[*He caresses the back of his uncle's head in affectionate rebuke.*]

I couldn't play their bones straight, but I played their brains straight. And hunch-*brains* are worse than hunch-*backs*. . . .

[*Suddenly perceiving his letter on the desk.*]

A letter for *me!*

[*He takes it with boyish eagerness, then hesitates to open it.*]

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

Oh, you may open it!

DAVID

[*Wistfully.*]

May I?

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

Yes, and quick — or it'll be *Shabbos!*

[DAVID *looks up at her in wonder.*]

MENDEL

[*Smiling.*]

You read your letter!

DAVID

[*He opens it eagerly, then smiles broadly with pleasure.*]

Oh, Miss Revendal! Isn't that great! To play again at your Settlement. I *am* getting famous.

VERA

But we can't offer you a fee.

MENDEL

[*Quickly sotto voce to* VERA.]

Thank you!

DAVID

A fee! I'd pay a fee to see all those happy immigrants you gather together, — Dutchmen and Greeks, Poles and Norwegians, Swiss and Armenians. If you only had Jews, it would be as good as going to Ellis Island.

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

What a strange taste! Who on earth wants to go to Ellis Island?

DAVID

Oh, I love going to Ellis Island to watch the ships coming in from Europe, and to think that all those weary, sea-tossed wanderers are feeling what *I* felt when America first stretched out her great mother-hand to *me!*

VERA

[*Softly.*]

Were you very happy?

DAVID

It was heaven. You must remember that all my life I had heard of America — everybody in our town had friends there or was going there or got money orders from there. The earliest game I played at was selling off my toy furniture and setting up in America. All my life America was waiting, beckoning, shining — the place where God would wipe away tears from off all faces.

[*He ends in a half-sob.*]

MENDEL

[*Rises, as in terror.*]

Now, now, David, don't get excited.

[*He approaches him.*]

DAVID

To think that the same great torch of liberty which threw its light across all the broad seas and lands into my little garret in Russia, is shining also for

all those other weeping millions of Europe, shining wherever men hunger and are oppressed —

MENDEL

[*Soothingly.*]

Yes, yes, David.

[*Laying hand on his shoulder.*]

Now sit down and —

DAVID

[*Unheeding.*]

Shining over the starving villages of Italy and Ireland, over the swarming stony cities of Poland and Galicia, over the ruined farms of Roumania, over the shambles of Russia —

MENDEL

[*Pleadingly.*]

David!

DAVID

Oh, Miss Revendal, when I look at our Statue of Liberty, I just seem to hear the voice of America crying: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest — rest — "

[*He is now almost sobbing.*]

MENDEL

Don't talk any more — you know it is bad for you.

DAVID

But Miss Revendal asked — and I want to explain to her what America means to me.

MENDEL

You can explain it in your American symphony.

VERA

[*Eagerly. To* DAVID.]

You compose?

DAVID

[*Embarrassed.*]

Oh, uncle, why did you talk of —? uncle always — my music is so thin and tinkling. When I am *writing* my American symphony, it seems like thunder crashing through a forest full of bird songs. But next day — oh, next day!

[*He laughs dolefully and turns away.*]

VERA

So your music finds inspiration in America?

DAVID

Yes — in the seething of the Crucible.

VERA

The Crucible? I don't understand!

DAVID

Not understand! You, the Spirit of the Settlement!

[*He rises and crosses to her and leans over the table, facing her.*]

Not understand that America is God's Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming! Here you stand, good folk, think I, when I see them at Ellis Island, here you stand

[*Graphically illustrating it on the table.*]

in your fifty groups, with your fifty languages and histories, and your fifty blood hatreds and rivalries. But you won't be long like that, brothers, for these are the fires of God you've come to — these are the fires of God. A fig for your feuds and vendettas! Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians — into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American.

MENDEL

I should have thought the American was made already — eighty millions of him.

DAVID

Eighty millions!

[*He smiles toward* VERA *in good-humoured derision.*]

Eighty millions! Over a continent! Why, that cockleshell of a Britain has forty millions! No, uncle, the real American has not yet arrived. He is only in

the Crucible, I tell you — he will be the fusion of all races, the coming superman. Ah, what a glorious Finale for my symphony — if I can only write it.

VERA

But you have written some of it already! May I not see it?

DAVID

[*Relapsing into boyish shyness.*]

No, if you please, don't ask —

[*He moves over to his desk and nervously shuts it down and turns the keys of drawers as though protecting his Ms.*]

VERA

Won't you give a bit of it at our Concert?

DAVID

Oh, it needs an orchestra.

VERA

But you at the violin and I at the piano —

MENDEL

You didn't tell me you played, Miss Revendal!

VERA

I told you less commonplace things.

DAVID

Miss Revendal plays quite like a professional.

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

I don't feel so complimented as you expect. You see I did have a professional training.

MENDEL

[*Smiling.*]

And I thought you came to *me* for lessons!

[DAVID *laughs.*]

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

No, I went to Petersburg —

DAVID

[*Dazed.*]

To Petersburg —?

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

Naturally. To the Conservatoire. There wasn't much music to be had at Kishineff, a town where —

DAVID

Kishineff!

[*He begins to tremble.*]

VERA

[*Still smiling.*]

My birthplace.

MENDEL

[*Coming toward him, protectingly.*]

Calm yourself, David.

DAVID

Yes, yes — so you are a Russian!

[*He shudders violently, staggers.*]

VERA

[*Alarmed.*]

You are ill!

DAVID

It is nothing, I — not much music at Kishineff! No, only the Death-March! . . . Mother! Father! Ah — cowards, murderers! And you!

[*He shakes his fist at the air.*]

You, looking on with your cold butcher's face! O God! O God!

[*He bursts into hysterical sobs and runs, shamefacedly, through the door to his room.*]

VERA

[*Wildly.*]

What have I said? What have I done?

MENDEL

Oh, I was afraid of this, I was afraid of this.

FRAU QUIXANO

[*Who has fallen asleep over her book, wakes as if with a sense of the horror and gazes dazedly around, adding to the thrillingness of the moment.*]

Dovidel! Wo ist Dovidel! Mir dacht sach—

MENDEL

[*Pressing her back to her slumbers.*]

Du träumst, Mutter! Schlaf!

[*She sinks back to sleep.*]

VERA

[*In hoarse whisper.*]

His father and mother were massacred?

MENDEL

[*In same tense tone.*]

Before his eyes — father, mother, sisters, down to the youngest babe, whose skull was battered in by a hooligan's heel.

VERA

How did *he* escape?

MENDEL

He was shot in the shoulder, and fell unconscious. As he wasn't a girl, the hooligans left him for dead and hurried to fresh sport.

VERA

Terrible! Terrible!

[*Almost in tears.*]

MENDEL

[*Shrugging shoulders, hopelessly.*]

It is only Jewish history! . . . David belongs to the species of *pogrom* orphan — they arrive in the States by almost every ship.

VERA

Poor boy! Poor boy! And he looked so happy!

[*She half sobs.*]

MENDEL

So he is most of the time — a sunbeam took human shape when he was born. But naturally that dreadful scene left a scar on his brain, as the bullet left a scar on his shoulder, and he is always liable to see red when Kishineff is mentioned.

VERA

I will never mention my miserable birthplace to him again.

MENDEL

But you see every few months the newspapers tell us of another *pogrom*, and then he screams out against what he calls that butcher's face, so that I tremble for his reason. I tremble even when I see him writing that crazy music about America, for it only means he is brooding over the difference between America and Russia.

VERA

But perhaps — perhaps — all the terrible memory will pass peacefully away in his music.

MENDEL

There will always be the scar on his shoulder to remind him — whenever the wound twinges, it brings up these terrible faces and visions.

VERA

Is it on his right shoulder?

MENDEL

No — on his left. For a violinist that is even worse.

VERA

Ah, of course — the weight and the fingering.
[*Subconsciously placing and fingering an imaginary violin.*]

MENDEL

That is why I fear so for his future — he will never be strong enough for the feats of bravura that the public demands.

VERA

The wild beasts! I feel more ashamed of my country than ever. But there's his symphony.

MENDEL

And who will look at that amateurish stuff? He knows so little of harmony and counterpoint — he breaks all the rules. I've tried to give him a few pointers — but he ought to have gone to Germany.

VERA

Perhaps it's not too late.

MENDEL

[*Passionately.*]

Ah, if you and your friends could help him! See — I'm begging after all. But it's not for myself.

VERA

My father loves music. Perhaps *he* — but no! he lives in Kishineff. But I will think — there are people here — I will write to you.

MENDEL

[*Fervently.*]

Thank you! Thank you!

VERA

Now you must go to him. Good-bye. Tell him I count upon him for the Concert.

MENDEL

How good you are!

[*He follows her to the street-door.*]

VERA

[*At door.*]

Say good-bye for me to your mother — she seems asleep.

MENDEL

[*Opening outer door.*]

I am sorry it is snowing so.

VERA

We Russians are used to it.

[*Smiling, at exit.*]

Good-bye — let us hope your David will turn out a Rubinstein.

MENDEL

[*Closing the doors softly.*]

I never thought a Russian Christian could be so human.

[*He looks at the clock.*]

Gott in Himmel — my dancing class!

[*He hurries into the overcoat hanging on the hat-rack. Re-enter* DAVID, *having composed himself, but still somewhat dazed.*]

DAVID

She is gone? Oh, but I have driven her away by my craziness. Is she very angry?

MENDEL

Quite the contrary — she expects you at the Concert, and what is more —

DAVID

[*Ecstatically.*]

And she understood! She understood my Crucible of God! Oh, uncle, you don't know what it means to me to have somebody who understands me. Even you have never understood —

MENDEL

[*Wounded.*]

Nonsense! How can Miss Revendal understand you better than your own uncle?

DAVID

[*Mystically exalted.*]

I can't explain — I feel it.

MENDEL

Of course she's interested in your music, thank Heaven! But what true understanding can there be between a Russian Jew and a Russian Christian?

DAVID

What understanding? Aren't we both Americans?

MENDEL

Well, I haven't time to discuss it now.

[*He winds his muffler round his throat.*]

DAVID

Why, where are you going?

MENDEL

[*Ironically.*]

Where *should* I be going — in the snow — on the eve of the Sabbath? Suppose we say to synagogue!

DAVID

Oh, uncle — how you always seem to hanker after those old things!

MENDEL

[*Tartly.*]

Nonsense!

[*He takes his umbrella from the stand.*]

I don't like to see our people going to pieces, that's all.

DAVID

Then why did you come to America? Why didn't you work for a Jewish land?

MENDEL

I can't argue now. There's a pack of giggling schoolgirls waiting to waltz.

DAVID

The fresh romping young things! Think of their happiness! I should love to play for them.

MENDEL

[*Sarcastically.*]

I can see you are yourself again.

[*He opens the street-door — turns back.*]

What about your own lesson? Can't we go together?

DAVID

I must first write down what is singing in my soul — oh, uncle, it seems as if I knew suddenly what was wanting in my music!

MENDEL

[*Drily.*]

Well, don't forget what is wanting in the house! The rent isn't paid yet.

[*Exit through street-door. As he goes out, he touches and kisses the* Mezuzah *on the door-post, with a subconsciously antagonistic revival of religious impulse.* DAVID *opens his desk, takes out a pile of musical manuscript, sprawls over his chair and, humming to himself, scribbles feverishly with the quill. After a few moments* FRAU QUIXANO *yawns, wakes, and stretches herself. Then she looks at the clock.*]

FRAU QUIXANO

Shabbos!

[*She rises and goes to the table and sees there are no candles, walks to the chiffonier and gets them and places them in the candlesticks, then lights the candles, muttering a ceremonial Hebrew benediction.*]

Boruch atto haddoshem elloheinu melech hoôlam assher kiddishonu bemitzvôsov vettzivonu lehadlik neir shel shabbos.

[*She pulls down the blinds of the two windows, then she goes to the rapt composer and touches him, remindingly, on the shoulder. He does not move, but continues writing.*]

Dovidel!

[*He looks up dazedly. She points to the candles.*]

Shabbos!

[*A sweet smile comes over his face, he throws the quill resignedly away and submits his head to her hands and her muttered Hebrew blessing.*]

Yesimcho elohim keefrayim vechimnasseh — yevorechecho haddoshem veyishmerecho, yoer haddoshem ponov eilecho vechunecho, yisso haddoshem ponov eilecho veyosem lecho sholôm.

[*Then she goes toward the kitchen. As she turns at the door, he is again writing. She shakes her finger at him, repeating*]

Gut Shabbos!

DAVID

Gut Shabbos!

[*Puts down the pen and smiles after her till the door closes, then with a deep sigh takes his cape from the peg and his violin case, pauses, still humming, to take up his pen and write down a fresh phrase, finally puts on his hat and is just about to open the street-door when* KATHLEEN *enters from her bedroom fully dressed to go, and laden with a large brown paper parcel and an umbrella. He turns at the sound of her footsteps and remains at the door, holding his violin case during the ensuing dialogue.*]

DAVID

You're not going out this bitter weather?

KATHLEEN

[*Sharply fending him off with her umbrella.*]

And who's to shtay me?

DAVID

Oh, but you mustn't — *I'll* do your errand — what is it?

KATHLEEN

[*Indignantly.*]

Errand, is it, indeed! I'm not here!

DAVID

Not here?

KATHLEEN

I'm lavin', they'll come for me thrunk — and ye'll witness I don't take the candleshtick!

DAVID

But who's sending you away?

KATHLEEN

It's sending meself away I am — I can't shtand your grandmother.

DAVID

But I haven't a grandmother.

KATHLEEN

She's just as bad —

DAVID

But what has the poor old la—?

KATHLEEN

What with salting the mate and mixing the crockery —!

DAVID

[*Gently.*]

I know, I know — but, Kathleen, remember she was brought up to these things from childhood. And her father was a Rabbi.

KATHLEEN

What's that? A praste?

DAVID

A sort of praste. In Russia he was a great man. Her husband, too, was a mighty scholar, and to give him time to study the holy books she had to do chores all day for him and the children.

KATHLEEN

Oh, those prastes!

DAVID

[*Smiling.*]

No, *he* wasn't a praste. But he took sick and died and the children left her — went to America or heaven or other far-off places — and she was left all penniless and alone.

KATHLEEN

Poor ould lady.

DAVID

Not so old yet, for she was married at fifteen.

KATHLEEN

Poor young chrayter!

DAVID

But she was still the good angel of the congregation — sat up with the sick and watched over the dead.

KATHLEEN

Saints alive! And not scared?

DAVID

No, nothing scared her — except me. I got a broken-down fiddle and used to play it even on *Shabbos* — I was very naughty. But she was so lovely to me. I still remember the heavenly taste of a piece of *Motso* she gave me dipped in raisin wine! Passover cake, you know.

KATHLEEN

[*Proudly.*]

Oh, *I* know *Motso.*

DAVID

[*Smacks his lips, repeats.*]

Heavenly!

KATHLEEN

Sure, I must tashte it.

DAVID

[*Shaking his head, mysteriously.*]

Only little boys get that tashte.

KATHLEEN

That's quare.

DAVID

[*Smiling.*]

Very quare. And then one day my uncle sent the old lady a ticket to come to America. But it is not so

happy for her here because you see my uncle has to be near his theatre and can't live in the Jewish quarter, and so nobody understands her, and she sits all the livelong day alone — alone with her book and her religion and her memories —

KATHLEEN

[*Breaking down.*]

Oh, Mr. David!

DAVID

And now all this long, cold, snowy evening she'll sit by the fire alone, thinking of her dead, and the fire will sink lower and lower, and she won't be able to touch it, because it's the holy Sabbath, and there'll be no kind Kathleen to brighten up the grey ashes, and then at last, sad and shivering, she'll creep up to her room without a candlestick, and there in the dark and the cold —

KATHLEEN

[*Hysterically bursting into tears, dropping her parcel, and untying her bonnet strings.*]

Oh, Mr. David, I won't mix the crockery, I won't —

DAVID

[*Heartily.*]

Of course you won't. Good night.

[*He slips out hurriedly through the street-door as* KATHLEEN *throws off her bonnet, and the curtain falls quickly. As it rises again, she is seen strenuously poking the fire, illumined by its red glow.*]

ACT II

[*The same scene on an afternoon a month later.* DAVID *is discovered at his desk, scribbling music in a fever of enthusiasm.* MENDEL, *dressed in his best, is playing softly on the piano, watching* DAVID. *After an instant or two of indecision, he puts down the piano-lid with a bang and rises decisively.*]

MENDEL

David!

DAVID

[*Putting up his left hand.*]

Please, please—

[*He writes feverishly.*]

MENDEL

But I want to talk to you seriously — at once.

DAVID

I'm just re-writing the Finale. Oh, such a splendid inspiration!

[*He writes on.*]

MENDEL

[*Shrugs his shoulders and reseats himself at piano. He plays a bar or two. Looks at watch impatiently. Resolutely.*]

David, I've got wonderful news for you. Miss Revendal is bringing somebody to see you, and we

have hopes of getting you sent to Germany to study composition.

[DAVID *does not reply, but writes rapidly on.*]

Why, he hasn't heard a word!

[*He shouts.*]

David!

DAVID

[*Writing on.*]

I can't, uncle. I *must* put it down while that glorious impression is fresh.

MENDEL

What impression? You only went to the People's Alliance.

DAVID

Yes, and there I saw the Jewish children — a thousand of 'em — saluting the Flag.

[*He writes on.*]

MENDEL

Well, what of that?

DAVID

What of that?

[*He throws down his quill and jumps up.*]

But just fancy it, uncle. The Stars and Stripes unfurled, and a thousand childish voices, piping and foreign, fresh from the lands of oppression, hailing its fluttering folds. I cried like a baby.

MENDEL

I'm afraid you *are* one.

DAVID

Ah, but if you had heard them — "Flag of our Great Republic" — the words have gone singing at my heart ever since —

[*He turns to the flag over the door.*]

"Flag of our Great Republic, guardian of our homes, whose stars and stripes stand for Bravery, Purity, Truth, and Union, we salute thee. We, the natives of distant lands, who find

[*Half-sobbing.*]

rest under thy folds, do pledge our hearts, our lives, our sacred honour to love and protect thee, our Country, and the liberty of the American people for ever."

[*He ends almost hysterically.*]

MENDEL

[*Soothingly.*]

Quite right. But you needn't get so excited over it.

DAVID

Not when one hears the roaring of the fires of God? Not when one sees the souls melting in the Crucible? Uncle, all those little Jews will grow up Americans!

MENDEL

[*Putting a pacifying hand on his shoulder and forcing him into a chair.*]

Sit down. I want to talk to you about your affairs.

DAVID

[*Sitting.*]

My affairs! But I've been talking about them all the time!

MENDEL

Nonsense, David.

[*He sits beside him.*]

Don't you think it's time you got into a wider world?

DAVID

Eh? This planet's wide enough for me.

MENDEL

Do be serious. You don't want to live all your life in this room.

DAVID

[*Looks round.*]

What's the matter with this room? It's princely.

MENDEL

[*Raising his hands in horror.*]

Princely!

DAVID

Imperial. Remember when I first saw it — after pigging a week in the rocking steerage, swinging in a berth as wide as my fiddle case, hung near the cooking engines; imagine the hot rancid smell of the food, the oil of the machinery, the odours of all that close-packed, sea-sick —

MENDEL

[*Putting his hand over* DAVID'S *mouth.*]

Don't! You make me ill! How could you ever bear it?

DAVID

[*Smiling.*]

I was quite happy — I only had to fancy I'd been shipwrecked, and that after clinging to a plank five days without food or water on the great lonely Atlantic, my frozen, sodden form had been picked up by this great safe steamer and given this delightful dry berth, regular meals, and the spectacle of all these friendly faces. . . . Do you know who was on board that boat? Quincy Davenport.

MENDEL

The lord of corn and oil?

DAVID

[*Smiling.*]

Yes, even we wretches in the steerage felt safe to think the lord was up above, and the company would never dare drown *him.* But could even Quincy Davenport command a cabin like this?

[*Waving his arm round the room.*]

Why, uncle, we have a cabin worth a thousand dollars — a thousand dollars a *week* — and what's more, it doesn't wobble!

[*He plants his feet voluptuously upon the floor.*]

MENDEL

Come, come, David, I asked you to be serious. Surely, some day you'd like your music produced?

DAVID

[*Jumps up.*]

Wouldn't it be glorious? To hear it all actually coming out of violins and 'cellos, drums and trumpets.

MENDEL

And you'd like it to go all over the world?

DAVID

All over the world and all down the ages.

MENDEL

But don't you see that unless you go and study seriously in Germany — ?

[*Enter* KATHLEEN *from kitchen, carrying a furnished tea-tray with ear-shaped cakes, bread and butter, etc., and wearing a grotesque false nose.* MENDEL *cries out in amaze*]

Kathleen!

DAVID

[*Roaring with boyish laughter.*]

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

KATHLEEN

[*Standing still with her tray.*]

Sure, phwat's the matter?

DAVID

Look in the glass!

KATHLEEN

[*Going to the mantel.*]

Houly Moses!

[*She drops the tray, which* MENDEL *catches, and snatches off the nose.*]

Sure, I forgot to take it off — 'twas the misthress gave it me — I put it on to cheer her up.

DAVID

Is she so miserable, then?

KATHLEEN

Terrible low, Mr. David, to-day being *Purim.*

MENDEL

Purim! Is to-day *Purim?*

[*Gives her the tea-tray back.* KATHLEEN, *to take it, drops her nose and forgets it.*]

DAVID

But *Purim* is a merry time, Kathleen, like your Carnival. Haven't you read the book of Esther — how the Jews of Persia escaped massacre?

KATHLEEN

That's what the misthress is so miserable about. Ye don't *keep* the Carnival. There's noses for both of ye in the kitchen — I went with her to Hester Street to buy 'em — but ye don't ax after 'em. And to see your noses laying around so solemn and neglected, faith, it nearly makes me chry meself.

MENDEL

[*Bitterly to himself.*]

Who can remember about *Purim* in America?

DAVID

[*Half-smiling.*]

Poor auntie, tell her to come in and I'll play her a *Purim* jig.

MENDEL

[*Hastily.*]

No, no, David, not here — the visitors!

DAVID

Visitors? What visitors?

MENDEL

[*Impatiently.*]

That's just what I've been trying to explain.

DAVID

Well, I can play in the kitchen.

[*He takes his violin. Exit to kitchen.* MENDEL *sighs and shrugs his shoulders hopelessly at the boy's perversity, then fingers the cups and saucers.*]

MENDEL

[*Anxiously.*]

Is that the *best* tea-set?

KATHLEEN

Sure, it's the Passover set!

[*Ruefully.*]

It'll be shpiled entirely now for Passover. . . . And the misthress thought the visitors might like to thry some of her *Purim* cakes.

[*Indicates ear-shaped cakes on tray.*]

MENDEL

[*Bitterly.*]

Purim cakes!

[*He turns his back on her and stares moodily out of the window.*]

KATHLEEN

[*Mutters contemptuously.*]

Call yerself a Jew and forgit to keep *Purim!*

[*She is going back to the kitchen when a merry Slavic dance breaks out, softened by the door; her feet unconsciously get more and more into dance step, and at last she jigs out. As she opens and passes through the door, the music sounds louder.*]

FRAU QUIXANO

[*Heard from kitchen.*]

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Kathleen!!

[MENDEL'S *feet, too, begin to take the swing of the music, and his feet dance as he stares out of the window. Suddenly the hoot of an automobile is heard, followed by the rattling up of the car.*]

MENDEL

Ah, she has brought somebody swell!

[*He throws open the doors and goes out eagerly to meet the visitors. The dance music goes on softly throughout the scene.*]

QUINCY DAVENPORT

[*Outside.*]

Oh, thank you — I leave the coats in the car.

[*Enter an instant later* QUINCY DAVENPORT *and* VERA REVENDAL, MENDEL *in the rear.* VERA *is dressed much as before, but with a motor veil, which she takes off during the scene.* DAVENPORT *is a dude, aping the air of a European sporting clubman. Aged about thirty-five and well set-up, he wears an orchid and an intermittent eyeglass, and gives the impression of a coarse-fibred and patronisingly facetious but not bad-hearted man, spoiled by prosperity.*]

MENDEL

Won't you be seated?

VERA

First let me introduce my friend, who is good enough to interest himself in your nephew — Mr. Quincy Davenport.

MENDEL

[*Struck of a heap.*]

Mr. Quincy Davenport! How strange!

VERA

What is strange?

MENDEL

David just mentioned Mr. Davenport's name — said they travelled to New York on the same boat.

QUINCY

Impossible! Always travel on my own yacht. Slow but select. Must have been another man of the same name — my dad. Ha! Ha! Ha!

MENDEL

Ah, of course. I thought you were too young.

QUINCY

My dad, Miss Revendal, is one of those antiquated Americans who are always in a hurry!

VERA

He burns coal and you burn time.

QUINCY

Precisely! Ha! Ha! Ha!

MENDEL

Won't you sit down — I'll go and prepare David.

VERA

[*Sitting.*]

You've not prepared him yet?

MENDEL

I've tried to more than once — but I never really got to —

[*He smiles.*]

to Germany.

[QUINCY *sits.*]

VERA

Then prepare him for *three* visitors.

MENDEL

Three?

VERA

You see Mr. Davenport himself is no judge of music.

QUINCY

[*Jumps up.*]

I beg your pardon.

VERA

In manuscript.

QUINCY

Ah, of course not. Music should be heard, not seen — like that jolly jig. Is that your David?

MENDEL

Oh, you mustn't judge him by that. He's just fooling.

QUINCY

Oh, he'd better not fool with Poppy. He's awful severe.

MENDEL

Poppy?

QUINCY

Pappelmeister — my private orchestra conductor.

MENDEL

Is it *your* orchestra Pappelmeister conducts?

QUINCY

Well, *I* pay the piper — and the drummer too!

[*He chuckles.*]

MENDEL

[*Sadly.*]

I wanted to play in it, but he turned me down.

QUINCY

I told you he was awful severe.

[*To* VERA.]

He only allows me comic opera once a week. My wife calls him the Bismarck of the baton.

MENDEL

[*Reverently.*]

A great conductor!

QUINCY

Would he have a twenty-thousand-dollar job with me if he wasn't? Not that he'd get half that in the

open market — only I have to stick it on to keep him for my guests exclusively.

[*Looks at watch.*]

But he ought to be here, confound him. A conductor should keep time, eh, Miss Revendal?

[*He sniggers.*]

MENDEL

I'll bring David. Won't you help yourselves to tea?

[*To* VERA.]

You see there's lemon for you — as in Russia.

[*Exit to kitchen — a moment afterwards the merry music stops in the middle of a bar.*]

VERA

Thank you.

[*Taking a cup.*]

Do *you* like lemon, Mr. Davenport?

QUINCY

[*Flirtatiously.*]

That depends. The last I had was in Russia itself — from the fair hands of your mother, the Baroness.

VERA

[*Pained.*]

Please don't say my mother, my mother is dead.

QUINCY

[*Fatuously misunderstanding.*]

Oh, you have no call to be ashamed of your step-mother — she's a stunning creature; all the points of a tip-top Russian aristocrat, or Quincy Davenport's no judge of breed! Doesn't speak English like your father — but then the Baron is a wonder.

VERA

[*Takes up tea-pot.*]

Father once hoped to be British Ambassador — that's why *I* had an English governess. But you never told me you met him in *Russia.*

QUINCY

Surely! When I gave you all those love messages —

VERA

[*Pouring tea quickly.*]

You said you met him at Wiesbaden.

QUINCY

Yes, but we grew such pals I motored him and the Baroness back to St. Petersburg. Jolly country, Russia — they know how to live.

VERA

[*Coldly.*]

I saw more of those who know how to die. . . . Milk and sugar?

QUINCY

[*Sentimentally.*]

Oh, Miss Revendal! Have you forgotten?

VERA

[*Politely snubbing.*]

How should I remember?

QUINCY

You don't remember our first meeting? At the Settlement Bazaar? When I paid you a hundred dollars for every piece of sugar you put in?

VERA

Did you? Then I hope you drank syrup.

QUINCY

Ugh! I hate sugar — I sacrificed myself.

VERA

To the Settlement? How heroic of you!

QUINCY

No, not to the Settlement. To you!

VERA

Then I'll only put milk in.

QUINCY

I hate milk. But from you —

VERA

Then we *must* fall back on the lemon.

QUINCY

I loathe lemon. But from —

VERA

Then you shall have your tea neat.

QUINCY

I detest tea, and here it would be particularly cheap and nasty. But —

VERA

Then you shall have a cake!

[*She offers plate.*]

QUINCY

[*Taking one.*]

Would they be eatable?

[*Tasting it.*]

Humph! Not bad.

[*Sentimentally.*]

A little cake was all you would eat the only time you came to one of my private concerts. Don't you remember? We went down to supper together.

VERA

[*Taking his tea for herself and putting in lemon.*]

I shall always remember the delicious music Herr Papp[illegible] ve us.

QUINCY

How unkind of you!

VERA

Unkind?

[*She sips the tea and puts down the cup.*]

To be grateful for the music?

QUINCY

You know what I mean — to forget *me!*

[*He tries to take her hand.*]

VERA

[*Rising.*]

Aren't you forgetting yourself?

QUINCY

You mean because I'm married to that patched-and-painted creature? She's hankering for the stage again, the old witch.

VERA

Hush! Marriages with comic opera stars are not usually domestic idylls.

QUINCY

I fell a victim to my love of music.

VERA

[*Murmurs, smiling.*]

Music!

QUINCY

And I hadn't yet met the right breed — the true blue blood of Europe. I'll get a divorce.

[*Approaching her.*]

Vera!

VERA

[*Retreating.*]

You will make me sorry I came to you.

QUINCY

No, don't say that — I promised the Baron I'd always do all I could for —

VERA

You promised? You dared discuss my affairs?

QUINCY

It was your father began it. When he found I knew you, he almost wept with emotion. He asked a hundred questions about your life in America.

VERA

His life and mine are for ever separate. He is a Reactionary, I a Radical.

QUINCY

But he loves you dreadfully — he can't understand why you should go slaving away summer and winter in a Settlement — you a member of the Russian nobility!

VERA

[*With faint smile.*]

I might say, *noblesse oblige*. But the truth is, I earn my living that way. It would do *you* good to slave there too!

QUINCY

[*Eagerly.*]

Would they chain us together? I'd come to-morrow.

[*He moves nearer her. There is a double knock at the door.*]

VERA

[*Relieved.*]

Here's Pappelmeister!

QUINCY

Bother Poppy — why is he so darned punctual?

[*Enter* KATHLEEN *from the kitchen.*]

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

Ah, you're still here.

KATHLEEN

And why would I not be here?

[*She goes to open the door.*]

PAPPELMEISTER

Mr. Quixano?

KATHLEEN

Yes, come in.

[*Enter* HERR PAPPELMEISTER, *a burly German figure with a leonine head, spectacles, and a mane of white hair — a figure that makes his employer look even coarser. He carries an umbrella, which he never lets go. He is at first grave and silent, which makes any burst of emotion the more striking. He and* QUINCY DAVENPORT *suggest a picture of "Dignity and Impudence." His English, as roughly indicated in the text, is extremely Teutonic.*]

QUINCY

You're late, Poppy!

[PAPPELMEISTER *silently bows to* VERA.]

VERA

[*Smilingly goes and offers her hand.*]

Proud to meet you, Herr Pappelmeister!

QUINCY

Excuse me —

[*Introducing.*]

Miss Revendal! — I forgot you and Poppy hadn't been introduced — curiously enough it was at Wiesbaden I picked him up too, — he was conducting the opera — your folks were in my box. I don't think I ever met any one so mad on music as the Baron. And the Baroness told me he had retired from active service in the Army because of the torture of listening to the average military band. Ha! Ha! Ha!

VERA

Yes, my father once hoped *my* music would comfort him.

[*She smiles sadly.*]

Poor father! But a soldier must bear defeat. Herr Pappelmeister, may I not give you some tea?

[*She sits again at the table.*]

QUINCY

Tea! Lager's more in Poppy's line.

[*He chuckles.*]

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Gravely.*]

Bitte. Tea.

[*She pours out, he sits.*]

Lemon. Four lumps. . . . *Nun,* five!

[*She hands him the cup.*]

Danke.

[*As he receives the cup, he utters an exclamation, for* KATHLEEN *after opening the door has lingered on, hunting around everywhere, and having finally crawled under the table has now brushed against his leg.*]

VERA

What are you looking for?

KATHLEEN

[*Her head emerging.*]

My nose!

[*They are all startled and amused.*]

VERA

Your nose?

KATHLEEN

I forgot me nose!

QUINCY

Well, follow your nose — and you'll find it. Ha! Ha! Ha!

KATHLEEN

[*Pouncing on it.*]

Here it is!

[*Picks it up near the armchair.*]

OMNES

Oh!

KATHLEEN

Sure, it's gotten all dirthy.

[*She takes out a handkerchief and wipes the nose carefully.*]

QUINCY

But why do you want a nose like that?

KATHLEEN

[*Proudly.*]

Bekaz we're Hebrews!

QUINCY

What!

VERA

What *do* you mean?

KATHLEEN

It's our Carnival to-day! *Purim.*

[*She carries her nose carefully and piously toward the kitchen.*]

VERA

Oh! I see.

[*Exit* KATHLEEN.

QUINCY

[*In horror.*]

Miss Revendal, you don't mean to say you've brought me to a Jew!

VERA

I'm afraid I have. I was thinking only of his genius, not his race. And you see, so many musicians are Jews.

QUINCY

Not *my* musicians. No Jew's harp in my orchestra, eh?

[*He sniggers.*]

I wouldn't have a Jew if he paid *me.*

VERA

I daresay you have some, all the same.

QUINCY

Impossible. Poppy! Are there any Jews in my orchestra?

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Removing the cup from his mouth and speaking with sepulchral solemnity.*]

Do you mean are dere any Christians?

QUINCY

[*In horror.*]

Gee-rusalem! Perhaps *you're* a Jew!

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Gravely.*]

I haf not de honour. But, if you brefer, I will gut out from my brogrammes all de Chewish composers. *Was?*

QUINCY

Why, of course. Fire 'em out, every mother's son of 'em.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Unsmiling.*]

Also—no more comic operas!

QUINCY

What!!!

PAPPELMEISTER

Dey write all de comic operas!

QUINCY

Brute!

[PAPPELMEISTER'S *chuckle is heard gurgling in his cup. Re-enter* MENDEL *from kitchen.*]

MENDEL

[*To* VERA.]

I'm so sorry — I can't get him to come in — he's terrible shy.

QUINCY

Won't face the music, eh?

[*He sniggers.*]

VERA

Did you tell him *I* was here?

MENDEL

Of course.

VERA

[*Disappointed.*]

Oh!

MENDEL

But I've persuaded him to let me show his Ms.

VERA

[*With forced satisfaction.*]

Oh, well, that's all we want.

[MENDEL *goes to the desk, opens it, and gets the Ms. and offers it to* QUINCY DAVENPORT.]

QUINCY

Not for me — Poppy!

[MENDEL *offers it to* PAPPELMEISTER, *who takes it solemnly.*]

MENDEL

[*Anxiously to* PAPPELMEISTER.]

Of course you must remember his youth and his lack of musical education —

PAPPELMEISTER

Bitte, das Pult!

[MENDEL *moves* DAVID'S *music-stand from the corner to the centre of the room.* PAPPELMEISTER *puts Ms. on it.*]

So!

[*All eyes centre on him eagerly,* MENDEL *standing uneasily, the others sitting.* PAPPELMEISTER *polishes his glasses with irritating elaborateness and weary "achs," then reads in absolute silence. A pause.*]

QUINCY

[*Bored by the silence.*]

But won't you play it to us?

PAPPELMEISTER

Blay it? Am I an orchestra? I blay it in my brain.

[*He goes on reading, his brow gets wrinkled. He ruffles his hair unconsciously. All watch him anxiously — he turns the page.*]

So!

VERA

[*Anxiously.*]

You don't seem to like it!

PAPPELMEISTER

I do not comprehend it.

MENDEL

I knew it was crazy — it is supposed to be about America or a Crucible or something. And of course there are heaps of mistakes.

VERA

That is why I am suggesting to Mr. Davenport to send him to Germany.

QUINCY

I'll send as many Jews as you like to Germany. Ha! Ha! Ha!

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Absorbed, turning pages.*]

Ach! — ach! — So!

QUINCY

I'd even lend my own yacht to take 'em back. Ha! Ha! Ha!

VERA

Sh! We're disturbing Herr Pappelmeister.

QUINCY

Oh, Poppy's all right.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Sublimely unconscious.*]

Ach so — so — SO! Das ist etwas neues!

[*His umbrella begins to beat time, moving more and more vigorously, till at last he is conducting elaborately, stretching out his left palm for pianissimo passages, and raising it vigorously for forte, with every now and then an exclamation.*]

Wunderschön! . . . pianissimo! — now the flutes! Clarinets! *Ach ergötzlich* . . . bassoons and drums! . . . *Fortissimo! . . . Colossal! Colossal!*

[*Conducting in a fury of enthusiasm.*]

VERA

Bravo! Bravo! I'm so excited!

QUINCY

[*Yawning.*]

Then it isn't bad, Poppy?

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Not listening, never ceasing to conduct.*]

Und de harp solo . . . *ach, reizvoll!* . . . Second violins — !

QUINCY

But Poppy! We can't be here all day.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Not listening, continuing pantomime action.*]

Sh! Sh! *Piano.*

QUINCY

[*Outraged.*]

Sh to *me!*

[*Rises.*]

VERA

He doesn't know it's you.

QUINCY

But look here, Poppy —

[*He seizes the wildly-moving umbrella. Blank stare of* PAPPELMEISTER *gradually returning to consciousness.*]

PAPPELMEISTER

Was ist . . . ?

QUINCY

We've had enough.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Indignant.*]

Enough? Enough? Of such a beaudiful symphony?

QUINCY

It may be beautiful to you, but to us it's damn dull. See here, Poppy, if you're satisfied that the young fellow has sufficient talent to be sent to study in Germany —

PAPPELMEISTER

In Germany! Germany has nodings to teach him, he has to teach Germany.

VERA

Bravo!

[*She springs up.*]

MENDEL

I always said he was a genius!

QUINCY

Well, at that rate you could put this stuff of his in one of my programmes. *Sinfonia Americana*, eh?

VERA

Oh, that *is* good of you!

PAPPELMEISTER

I should be broud to indroduce it to de vorld.

VERA

And will it be played in that wonderful marble music-room overlooking the Hudson?

QUINCY

Sure. Before five hundred of the smartest folk in America.

MENDEL

Oh, thank you, thank you. That will mean fame!

QUINCY

And dollars. Don't forget the dollars.

MENDEL

I'll run and tell him.

[*He hastens into the kitchen,* PAPPELMEISTER *is re-absorbed in the Ms., but no longer conducting.*]

QUINCY

You see, I'll help even a Jew for your sake.

VERA

Hush!

[*Indicating* PAPPELMEISTER.]

QUINCY

Oh, Poppy's in the moon.

VERA

You must help him for his own sake.

QUINCY

And why not for my sake?

[*He comes nearer.*]

VERA

[*Crossing to* PAPPELMEISTER.]

Herr Pappelmeister! When do you think you can produce it?

PAPPELMEISTER

Wunderbar! . . .

[*Becoming half-conscious of* VERA.]

Four lumps. . . .

[*Waking up.*]

Bitte?

VERA

How soon can you produce it?

PAPPELMEISTER

How soon can he finish it?

VERA

Isn't it finished?

PAPPELMEISTER

I see von Finale scratched out and anoder not quite completed. But anyhow, ve couldn't broduce it before Saturday fortnight.

QUINCY

Saturday fortnight! Not time to get my crowd.

PAPPELMEISTER

Den ve say Saturday dree veeks. Yes?

QUINCY

Yes. Stop a minute! Did you say Saturday? That's my comic opera night! You thief!

PAPPELMEISTER

Somedings must be sagrificed.

MENDEL

[*Outside.*]

You *must* come, David.

[*The kitchen door opens, and* MENDEL *drags in the boyishly shrinking* DAVID. PAPPELMEISTER *thumps with his umbrella,* VERA *claps her hands,* QUINCY DAVENPORT *produces his eyeglass and surveys* DAVID *curiously.*]

VERA

Oh, Mr. Quixano, I am so glad! Mr. Davenport is going to produce your symphony in his wonderful music-room.

QUINCY

Yes, young man, I'm going to give you the smartest audience in America. And if Poppy is right, you're just going to rake in the dollars. America wants a composer.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Raises hands emphatically.*]

Ach Gott, ja!

VERA

[*To* DAVID.]

Why don't you speak? You're not angry with me for interfering — ?

DAVID

I can never be grateful enough to you —

VERA

Oh, not to me. It is to Mr. Davenport you —

DAVID

And I can never be grateful enough to Herr Pappelmeister. It is an honour even to meet him.

[*Bows.*]

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Choking with emotion, goes and pats him on the back.*]

Mein braver Junge!

VERA

[*Anxiously.*]

But it is Mr. Davenport —

DAVID

Before I accept Mr. Davenport's kindness, I must know to whom I am indebted — and if Mr. Davenport is the man who —

QUINCY

Who travelled with you to New York? Ha! Ha! Ha! No, *I'm* only the junior.

DAVID

Oh, I know, sir, you don't make the money you spend.

QUINCY

Eh?

VERA

[*Anxiously.*]

He means he knows you're not in business.

DAVID

Yes, sir; but is it true you are in pleasure?

QUINCY

[*Puzzled.*]

I beg your pardon?

DAVID

Are all the stories the papers print about you true?

QUINCY

All the stories. That's a tall order. Ha! Ha! Ha!

DAVID

Well, anyhow, is it true that —?

VERA

Mr. Quixano! What *are* you driving at?

QUINCY

Oh, it's rather fun to hear what the masses read about me. Fire ahead. Is what true?

DAVID

That you were married in a balloon?

QUINCY

Ho! Ha! Ha! That's true enough. Marriage in high life, they said, didn't they? Ha! Ha! Ha!

DAVID

And is it true you live in America only two months in the year, and then only to entertain Europeans who wander to these wild parts?

QUINCY

Lucky for you, young man. You'll have an Italian prince and a British duke to hear your scribblings.

DAVID

And the palace where they will hear my scribblings — is it true that — ?

VERA

[*Who has been on pins and needles.*]

Mr. Quixano, what possible — ?

DAVID

[*Entreatingly holds up a hand.*]

Miss Revendal!

[*To* QUINCY DAVENPORT.]

Is this palace the same whose grounds were turned into Venetian canals where the guests ate in gondolas — gondolas that were draped with the most wonderful trailing silks in imitation of the Venetian nobility in the great water fêtes?

QUINCY

[*Turns to* VERA.]

Ah, Miss Revendal — what a pity you refused that invitation! It was a fairy scene of twinkling lights and delicious darkness — each couple had their own gondola to sup in, and their own side-canal to slip down. Eh? Ha! Ha! Ha!

DAVID

And the same night, women and children died of hunger in New York!

QUINCY

[*Startled, drops eyeglass.*]

Eh?

DAVID

[*Furiously.*]

And this is the sort of people you would invite to hear my symphony — these gondola-guzzlers!

VERA

Mr. Quixano!

MENDEL

David!

DAVID

These magnificent animals who went into the gondolas two by two, to feed and flirt!

QUINCY

[*Dazed.*]

Sir!

DAVID

I should be a new freak for you for a new freak evening — I and my dreams and my music!

QUINCY

You low-down, ungrateful —

DAVID

Not for you and such as you have I sat here writing and dreaming; not for you who are killing my America!

QUINCY

Your America, forsooth, you Jew-immigrant!

VERA

Mr. Davenport!

DAVID

Yes — Jew-immigrant! But a Jew who knows that your Pilgrim Fathers came straight out of his Old Testament, and that our Jew-immigrants are a greater factor in the glory of this great commonwealth than some of you sons of the soil. It is you, freak-fashionables, who are undoing the work of Washington and Lincoln, vulgarising your high heritage, and turning the last and noblest hope of humanity into a caricature.

QUINCY

[*Rocking with laughter.*]

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho! Ho!

[*To* VERA.]

You never told me your Jew-scribbler was a socialist!

DAVID

I am nothing but a simple artist, but I come from Europe, one of her victims, and I know that she is a failure; that her palaces and peerages are outworn toys of the human spirit, and that the only hope of mankind lies in a new world. And here — in the land of to-morrow — you are trying to bring back Europe —

QUINCY

[*Interjecting.*]

I wish we could! —

DAVID

Europe with her comic-opera coronets and her worm-eaten stage decorations, and her pomp and chivalry built on a morass of crime and misery —

QUINCY

[*With sneering laugh.*]

Morass! —

DAVID

[*With prophetic passion.*]

But you shall not kill my dream! There shall come a fire round the Crucible that will melt you and your breed like wax in a blowpipe —

QUINCY

[*Furiously, with clenched fist.*]

You —

DAVID

America *shall* make good . . . !

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Who has sat down and remained imperturbably seated throughout all this scene, springs up and waves his umbrella hysterically.*]

Hoch Quixano! Hoch! Hoch! Es lebe Quixano! Hoch!

QUINCY

Poppy! You're dismissed!

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Goes to* DAVID *with outstretched hand.*]

Danke.

[*They grip hands.* PAPPELMEISTER *turns to* QUINCY DAVENPORT.]

Comic Opera! Ouf!

QUINCY

[*Goes to street-door, at white heat.*]

Are you coming, Miss Revendal?

[*He opens the door.*]

VERA

[*To* QUINCY, *but not moving.*]

Pray, pray, accept my apologies — believe me, if I had known —

QUINCY

[*Furiously.*]

Then stop with your Jew!

[*Exit.*]

MENDEL

[*Frantically.*]

But, Mr. Davenport, — don't go! He is only a boy.

[*Exit after* QUINCY DAVENPORT.]

You must consider —

DAVID

Oh, Herr Pappelmeister, you have lost your place!

PAPPELMEISTER

And saved my soul. Dollars are de devil. Now I must to an appointment. *Auf baldiges Wiedersehen.*

[*He shakes* DAVID'S *hand.*]

Fräulein Revendal!

[*He takes her hand and kisses it. Exit.* DAVID *and* VERA *stand gazing at each other.*]

VERA

What have you done? What have you done?

DAVID

What else could I do?

VERA

I hate the smart set as much as you — but as your ladder and your trumpet —

DAVID

I would not stand indebted to them. I know you meant it for my good, but what would these Europe-

apers have understood of *my* America — the America of my music? They look back on Europe as a pleasure ground, a palace of art — but I know

[*Getting hysterical.*]

it is sodden with blood, red with bestial massacres —

VERA

[*Alarmed, anxious.*]

Let us talk no more about it.

[*She holds out her hand.*]

Good-bye.

DAVID

[*Frozen, taking it, holding it.*]

Ah, you are offended by my ingratitude — I shall never see you again.

VERA

No, I am not offended. But I have failed to help you. We have nothing else to meet for.

[*She disengages her hand.*]

DAVID

Why will you punish me so? I have only hurt myself.

VERA

It is not a *punishment.*

DAVID

What else? When you are with me, all the air seems to tremble with fairy music played by some unseen fairy orchestra.

VERA

[*Tremulous.*]

And yet you wouldn't come in just now when I —

DAVID

I was too frightened of the others . . .

VERA

[*Smiles.*]

Frightened indeed!

DAVID

Yes, I know I became overbold — but to take all that magic sweetness out of my life for ever — you don't call that a punishment?

VERA

[*Blushing.*]

How could I wish to punish you? I was proud of you!

[*Drops her eyes, murmurs.*]

Besides it would be punishing *myself.*

DAVID

[*In passionate amaze.*]

Miss Revendal! . . . But no, it cannot be. It is too impossible.

VERA

[*Frightened.*]

Yes, too impossible. Good-bye.

[*She turns.*]

DAVID

But not for always?

[VERA *hangs her head. He comes nearer. Passionately.*]

Promise me that you — that I —

[*He takes her hand again.*]

VERA

[*Melting at his touch, breathes.*]

Yes, yes, David.

DAVID

Miss Revendal!

[*She falls into his arms.*]

VERA

My dear! my dear!

DAVID

It is a dream. You cannot care for me — you so far above me.

VERA

Above you, you simple boy? Your genius lifts you to the stars.

DAVID

No, no; it is you who lift me there —

VERA

[*Smoothing his hair.*]

Oh, David. And to think that I was brought up to despise your race.

DAVID

[*Sadly.*]

Yes, all Russians are.

VERA

But we of the nobility in particular.

DAVID

[*Amazed, half-releasing her.*]

You are noble?

VERA

My father is Baron Revendal, but I have long since carved out a life of my own.

DAVID

Then he will not separate us?

VERA

No.

[*Re-embracing him.*]

Nothing can separate us.

[*A knock at the street-door. They separate. The automobile is heard clattering off.*]

DAVID

It is my uncle coming back.

VERA

[*In low, tense tones.*]

Then I shall slip out. I could not bear a third. I will write.

[*She goes to the door.*]

DAVID

Yes, yes . . . Vera.

[*He follows her to the door. He opens it and she slips out.*]

MENDEL

[*Half-seen at the door, expostulating.*]

You, too, Miss Revendal — ?

[*Re-enters.*]

Oh, David, you have driven away all your friends.

DAVID

[*Going to window and looking after* VERA.]

Not all, uncle. Not all.

[*He throws his arms boyishly round his uncle.*]

I am so happy.

MENDEL

Happy ?

DAVID

She loves me — Vera loves me.

MENDEL

Vera ?

DAVID

Miss Revendal.

MENDEL

Have you lost your wits ?

[*He throws* DAVID *off.*]

DAVID

I don't wonder you're amazed. Maybe you think *I* wasn't. It is as if an angel should stoop down —

MENDEL

[*Hoarsely.*]

This is true? This is not some stupid *Purim* joke?

DAVID

True and sacred as the sunrise.

MENDEL

But you are a Jew!

DAVID

Yes, and just think! She was bred up to despise Jews — her father was a Russian baron —

MENDEL

If she was the daughter of fifty barons, you cannot marry her.

DAVID

[*In pained amaze.*]

Uncle!

[*Slowly.*]

Then your hankering after the synagogue was serious after all.

MENDEL

It is not so much the synagogue — it is the call of our blood through immemorial generations.

DAVID

You say that! You who have come to the heart of the Crucible, where the roaring fires of God are fusing our race with all the others.

MENDEL

[*Passionately.*]

Not *our* race, not your race and mine.

DAVID

What immunity has our race?

[*Meditatively.*]

The pride and the prejudice, the dreams and the sacrifices, the traditions and the superstitions, the fasts and the feasts, things noble and things sordid — they must all into the Crucible.

MENDEL

[*With prophetic fury.*]

The Jew has been tried in a thousand fires and only tempered and annealed.

DAVID

Fires of hate, not fires of love. That is what melts.

MENDEL

[*Sneers.*]

So I see.

DAVID

Your sneer is false. The love that melted me was not Vera's — it was the love *America* showed me — the day she gathered me to her breast.

MENDEL

[*Speaking passionately and rapidly.*]

Many countries have gathered us. Holland took us when we were driven from Spain — but we did

not become Dutchmen. Turkey took us when Germany oppressed us, but we have not become Turks.

DAVID

These countries were not in the making. They were old civilisations stamped with the seal of creed. Here in this new secular Republic we must look forward —

MENDEL

[*Passionately interrupting.*]

We must look backwards, too.

DAVID

[*Hysterically.*]

To what? To Kishineff?

[*As if seeing his vision.*]

To that butcher's face directing the slaughter? To those —?

MENDEL

[*Alarmed.*]

Hush! Calm yourself!

DAVID

[*Struggling with himself.*]

Yes, I will calm myself — but how else shall I calm myself save by forgetting all that nightmare of religions and races, save by holding out my hands with prayer and music toward the Republic of Man and the Kingdom of God! The Past I cannot mend

— its evil outlines are stamped in immortal rigidity. Take away the hope that I can mend the Future, and you make me mad.

MENDEL

You are mad already — your dreams are mad — the Jew is hated here as everywhere — you are false to your race.

DAVID

I keep faith with America. I have faith America will keep faith with us.

[*He raises his hands in religious rapture toward the flag over the door.*]

Flag of our great Republic, guardian of our homes, whose stars and —

MENDEL

Spare me that rigmarole. Go out and marry your Gentile and be happy.

DAVID

You turn me out?

MENDEL

Would you stay and break my mother's heart? You know she would mourn for you as for a child of her own. Go! You have cast off the God of our fathers!

DAVID

[*Thundrously.*]

And the God of our children — does *He* demand no service?

[*Quieter, coming toward his uncle and touching him affectionately on the shoulder.*]

You are right — I do need a wider world.

[*Expands his lungs.*]

I must go away.

MENDEL

Go, then — I'll hide the truth — she must never suspect — lest she mourn you as dead.

FRAU QUIXANO

[*Outside, in the kitchen.*]

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

[*Both men turn toward the kitchen and listen.*]

KATHLEEN

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

FRAU QUIXANO AND KATHLEEN

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

MENDEL

[*Bitterly.*]

A merry *Purim!*

[*The kitchen door opens and remains ajar.* FRAU QUIXANO *rushes in, carrying* DAVID'S *violin and bow.* KATHLEEN *looks in, grinning.*]

FRAU QUIXANO

[*Hilariously.*]

Nu spiel noch! spiel!

[*She holds the violin and bow appealingly toward* DAVID.]

MENDEL

[*Putting out a protesting hand.*]

No, no, David — I couldn't bear it.

DAVID

But I must! You said she mustn't suspect.

[*He looks lovingly at her as he loudly utters these words, which are unintelligible to her.*]

And it may be the last time I shall ever play for her.

[*Changing to a mock merry smile as he takes the violin and bow from her.*]

Gewiss, Mumme!

[*He starts the same old Slavic dance.*]

FRAU QUIXANO

[*Childishly pleased.*]

He! He! He!

[*She claps on a false grotesque nose from her pocket.*]

DAVID

[*Torn between laughter and tears.*]

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

MENDEL

[*Shocked.*]

Mutter!

FRAU QUIXANO

Un' du auch!

[*She claps another false nose on* MENDEL, *laughing in childish glee at the effect. Then she starts dancing to the music, and* KATHLEEN *slips in and joyously dances beside her.*]

DAVID

[*Joining tearfully in the laughter.*]

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

[*The curtain falls quickly. It rises again upon the picture of* FRAU QUIXANO *fallen back into a chair, exhausted with laughter, fanning herself with her apron, while* KATHLEEN *has dropped breathless across the arm of the armchair;* DAVID *is still playing on, and* MENDEL, *his false nose torn off, stands by, glowering. The curtain falls again and rises upon a final tableau of* DAVID *in his cloak and hat, stealing out of the door with his violin, casting a sad farewell glance at the old woman and at the home which has sheltered him.*]

ACT III

[*April, about a month later. The scene changes to* MISS REVENDAL'S *sitting room at the Settlement House on a sunny day. Simple, pretty furniture: a sofa, chairs, small table, etc. An open piano with music. Flowers and books about. Fine art reproductions on walls. The fireplace is on the left. A door on the left leads to the hall, and a door on the right to the interior. A servant enters from the left, ushering in* BARON *and* BARONESS REVENDAL *and* QUINCY DAVENPORT. *The* BARON *is a tall, stern, grizzled man of military bearing, with a narrow, fanatical forehead and martinet manners, but otherwise of honest and distinguished appearance, with a short, well-trimmed white beard and well-cut European clothes. Although his dignity is diminished by the constant nervous suspiciousness of the Russian official, it is never lost; his nervousness, despite its comic side, being visibly the tragic shadow of his position. His English has only a touch of the foreign in accent and vocabulary and is much superior to his wife's, which comes to her through her French. The* BARONESS *is pretty and dressed in red in the height of Paris fashion, but blazes with barbaric jewels at neck and throat and wrist. She gestures freely with her hand, which, when ungloved, glitters with heavy rings. She is much younger than the* BARON *and self-consciously fascinating. Her parasol, which matches her costume, suggests the sunshine without.* QUINCY DAVENPORT *is in a smart spring suit with a motor dust-coat and cap, which last he lays down on the mantelpiece.*]

SERVANT

Miss Revendal is on the roof-garden. I'll go and tell her.

[*Exit, toward the hall.*]

BARON

A marvellous people, you Americans. Gardens in the sky!

QUINCY

Gardens, forsooth! We plant a tub and call it Paradise. No, Baron. New York is the great stone desert.

BARONESS

But ze big beautiful Park vere ve drove true?

QUINCY

No taste, Baroness, modern sculpture and menageries! Think of the Medici gardens at Rome.

BARONESS

Ah, Rome!

[*With an ecstatic sigh, she drops into an armchair. Then she takes out a dainty cigarette-case, pulls off her right-hand glove, exhibiting her rings, and chooses a cigarette. The* BARON, *seeing this, produces his match-box.*]

QUINCY

And now, dear Baron Revendal, having brought you safely to the den of the lioness,— if I may venture to call your daughter so, — I must leave *you* to do the taming, eh?

BARON

You are always of the most amiable.

[*He strikes a match.*]

BARONESS

Tout à fait charmant.

[*The* BARON *lights her cigarette.*]

QUINCY

[*Bows gallantly.*]

Don't mention it. I'll just have my auto take me to the Club, and then I'll send it back for you.

BARONESS

Ah, zank you — zat street-car looks horreeble.

[*She puffs out smoke.*]

BARON

Quite impossible. What is to prevent an anarchist sitting next to you and shooting out your brains?

QUINCY

We haven't much of that here — I don't mean brains. Ha! Ha! Ha!

BARON

But I saw desperadoes spying as we came off your yacht.

QUINCY

Oh, that was newspaper chaps.

BARON

[*Shakes his head.*]

No — they are circulating my appearance to all the gang in the States. They took snapshots.

QUINCY

Then you're quite safe from recognition.

[*He sniggers.*]

Didn't they ask you questions?

BARON

Yes, but I am a diplomat. I do not reply.

QUINCY

That's not very diplomatic here. Ha! Ha!

BARON

Diable!

[*He claps his hand to his hip pocket, half-producing a pistol. The* BARONESS *looks equally anxious.*]

QUINCY

What's up?

BARON

[*Points to window, whispers hoarsely.*]

Regard! A hooligan peeped in!

QUINCY

[*Goes to window.*]

Only some poor devil come to the Settlement.

BARON

[*Hoarsely.*]

But under his arm — a bomb!

QUINCY

[*Shaking his head smilingly.*]

A soup bowl.

BARONESS

Ha! Ha! Ha!

QUINCY

What makes you so nervous, Baron?

[*The* BARON *slips back his pistol, a little ashamed.*]

BARONESS

Ze Intellectuals and ze Bund, zey all hate my husband because he is faizful to Christ

[*Crossing herself.*]

and ze Czar.

QUINCY

But the Intellectuals are in Russia.

BARON

They have their branches here — the refugees are the leaders — it is a diabolical network.

QUINCY

Well, anyhow, *we're* not in Russia, eh? No, no, Baron, you're quite safe. Still, you can keep my automobile as long as you like — I've plenty.

BARON

A thousand thanks.

[*Wiping his forehead.*]

But surely no gentleman would sit in the public car, squeezed between workingmen and shop-girls, not to say Jews and Blacks.

QUINCY

It *is* done here. But we shall change all that. Already we have a few taxi-cabs. Give us time, my dear Baron, give us time. You mustn't judge us by your European standard.

BARON

By the European standard, Mr. Davenport, you put our hospitality to the shame. From the moment you sent your yacht for us to Odessa—

QUINCY

Pray, don't ever speak of that again—you know how anxious I was to get you to New York.

BARON

Provided we have arrived in time!

QUINCY

That's all right, I keep telling you. They aren't married yet—

BARON

[*Grinding his teeth and shaking his fist.*]

Those Jew-vermin—all my life I have suffered from them!

QUINCY

We all suffer from them.

BARONESS

Zey are ze pests of ze civilisation.

BARON

But this supreme insult Vera shall not put on the blood of the Revendals — not if I have to shoot her down with my own hand — and myself after!

QUINCY

No, no, Baron, that's not done here. Besides, if you shoot her down, where do *I* come in, eh?

BARON

[*Puzzled.*]

Where *you* come in?

QUINCY

Oh, Baron! Surely you have guessed that it is not merely Jew-hate, but — er — Christian love. Eh?

[*Laughing uneasily.*]

BARON

You!

BARONESS

[*Clapping her hands.*]

Oh, *charmant, charmant!* But it ees a romance!

BARON

But you are married!

BARONESS

[*Downcast.*]

Ah, oui. Quel dommage, vat a peety!

QUINCY

You forget, Baron, we are in America. The law giveth and the law taketh away.

[*He sniggers.*]

BARONESS

It ees a vonderful country! But your vife — *hein?* — vould she consent?

QUINCY

She's mad to get back on the stage — I'll run a theatre for her. It's your daughter's consent that's the real trouble — she won't see me because I lost my temper and told her to stop with her Jew. So I look to you to straighten things out.

BARONESS

Mais parfaitement.

BARON

[*Frowning at her.*]

You go too quick, Katusha. What influence have I on Vera? And *you* she has never even seen! To kick out the Jew-beast is one thing. . . .

QUINCY

Well, anyhow, don't *shoot* her — shoot the beast rather.

[*Sniggeringly.*]

BARON

Shooting is too good for the enemies of Christ.

[*Crossing himself.*]

At Kishineff we stick the swine.

QUINCY

[*Interested.*]

Ah! I read about that. Did you see the massacre?

BARON

Which one? Give me a cigarette, Katusha.

[*She obeys.*]

We've had several Jew-massacres.

QUINCY

Have you? The papers only boomed one — four or five years ago — about Easter time, I think —

BARON

Ah, yes — when the Jews insulted the procession of the Host!

[*Taking a light from the cigarette in his wife's mouth.*]

QUINCY

Did they? I thought —

BARON

[*Sarcastically.*]

I daresay. That's the lies they spread in the West. They have the Press in their hands, damn 'em. But you see I was on the spot.

[*He drops into a chair.*]

I had charge of the whole district.

QUINCY

[*Startled.*]

You!

BARON

Yes, and I hurried a regiment up to teach the blaspheming brutes manners —

[*He puffs out a leisurely cloud.*]

QUINCY

[*Whistling.*]

Whew! . . . I — I say, old chap, I mean Baron, you'd better not say that here.

BARON

Why not? I am proud of it.

BARONESS

My husband vas decorated for it — he has ze order of St. Vladimir.

BARON

[*Proudly.*]

Second class! Shall we allow these bigots to mock at all we hold sacred? The Jews are the deadliest enemies of our holy autocracy and of the only orthodox Church. Their *Bund* is behind all the Revolution.

BARONESS

A plague-spot muz be cut out!

QUINCY

Well, I'd keep it dark if I were you. Kishineff is a back number, and we don't take much stock in the new massacres. Still, we're a bit squeamish —

BARON

Squeamish! Don't you lynch and roast your niggers?

QUINCY

Not officially. Whereas your Black Hundreds —

BARON

Black Hundreds! My dear Mr. Davenport, they are the white hosts of Christ

[*Crossing himself.*]

and of the Czar, who is God's vicegerent on earth. Have you not read the works of our sainted Pobiedonostzeff, Procurator of the Most Holy Synod?

QUINCY

Well, of course, I always felt there was another side to it, but still —

BARONESS

Perhaps he has right, Alexis. Our Ambassador vonce told me ze Americans are more sentimental zan civilised.

BARON

Ah, let them wait till they have ten million vermin overrunning *their* country — we shall see how long they will be sentimental. Think of it! A burrowing swarm creeping and crawling everywhere, ugh! They ruin our peasantry with their loans and their drink shops, ruin our army with their revolutionary propaganda, ruin our professional classes by snatching all the prizes and professorships, ruin our commercial classes by monopolising our sugar industries, our oil-fields, our timber-trade. . . . Why, if we gave them equal rights, our Holy Russia would be entirely run by them.

BARONESS

Mon dieu! C'est vrai. Ve real Russians vould become slaves.

QUINCY

Then what are you going to do with them?

BARON

One-third will be baptized, one-third massacred, the other third emigrated here.

[*He strikes a match to relight his cigarette.*]

QUINCY

[*Shudderingly.*]

Thank you, my dear Baron, — you've already sent me one Jew too many. We're going to stop all alien immigration.

BARON

To stop *all* alien — ? But that is barbarous!

QUINCY

Well, don't let us waste our time on the Jew-problem . . . our own little Jew-problem is enough, eh? Get rid of this little fiddler. Then *I* may have a look in. Adieu, Baron.

BARON

Adieu.

[*Holding his hand.*]

But you are not really serious about Vera?

[*The* BARONESS *makes a gesture of annoyance.*]

QUINCY

Not serious, Baron? Why, to marry her is the only thing I have ever wanted that I couldn't get. It is torture! Baroness, I rely on your sympathy.

[*He kisses her hand with a pretentious foreign air.*]

BARONESS

[*In sentimental approval.*]

Ah! l'amour! l'amour!

[*Exit* QUINCY DAVENPORT, *taking his cap in passing.*]

You might have given him a little encouragement, Alexis.

BARON

Silence, Katusha. I only tolerated the man in Europe because he was a link with Vera.

BARONESS

You accepted his yacht and his —

BARON

If I had known his loose views on divorce —

BARONESS

I am sick of your scruples. You are ze only poor official in Bessarabia.

BARON

Be silent! Have I not forbidden —?

BARONESS

[*Petulantly.*]

Forbidden! Forbidden! All your life you have served ze Czar, and you cannot afford a single automobile. A millionnaire son-in-law is just vat you owe me.

BARON

What I owe you?

BARONESS

Yes, ven I married you, I vas tinking you had a good position. I did not know you were too honest to use it. You vere not open viz me, Alexis.

BARON

You knew I was a Revendal. The Revendals keep their hands clean. . . .

[*With a sudden start he tiptoes noiselessly to the door leading to the hall and throws it open. Nobody is visible. He closes it shamefacedly.*]

BARONESS

[*Has shared his nervousness till the door was opened, but now bursts into mocking laughter.*]

If you thought less about your precious safety, and more about me and Vera—

BARON

Hush! You do not know Vera. You saw I was even afraid to give my name. She might have sent me away as she sent away the Czar's plate of mutton.

BARONESS

The Czar's plate of —?

BARON

Did I never tell you? When she was only a schoolgirl — at the Imperial High School — the Czar on his annual visit tasted the food, and Vera as the show pupil was given the honour of finishing His Majesty's plate.

BARONESS

[*In incredulous horror.*]

And she sent it avay?

BARON

Gave it to a servant.

[*Awed silence.*]

And then you think I can impose a husband on her. No, Katusha, I have to win her love for myself, not for millionnaires.

BARONESS

[*Angry again.*]

Alvays so affrightfully selfish!

BARON

I have no control over her, I tell you!

[*Bitterly.*]

I never could control my womenkind.

BARONESS

Because you zink zey are your soldiers. Silence! Halt! Forbidden! Right Veel! March!

BARON

[*Sullenly.*]

I wish I did think they were my soldiers — I might try the lash.

BARONESS

[*Springing up angrily, shakes parasol at him.*]

You British barbarian!

VERA

[*Outside the door leading to the interior.*]

Yes, thank you, Miss Andrews. I know I have visitors.

BARON

[*Ecstatically.*]

Vera's voice!

[*The* BARONESS *lowers her parasol. He looks yearningly toward the door. It opens. Enter* VERA *with inquiring gaze.*]

VERA

[*With a great shock of surprise.*]

Father!!

BARON

My dearest darling! . . .

[*He makes a movement toward her, but is checked by her irresponsiveness.*]

Why, you've grown more beautiful than ever.

VERA

You in New York!

BARON

The Baroness wished to see America. Katusha, this is my daughter.

BARONESS

[*In sugared sweetness.*]

And mine, too, if she vill let me love her.

VERA

[*Bowing coldly.*]

But how? When?

BARON

We have just come and —

BARONESS

[*Dashing in.*]

Zat charming young man lent us his yacht — he is adoràhble.

VERA

What charming young man?

BARONESS

Ah, she has many, ze little coquette — ha! ha! ha!

[*She touches* VERA *playfully with her parasol.*]

BARON

We wished to give you a pleasant surprise.

VERA

It is certainly a surprise.

BARON

[*Chilled.*]

You are not very . . . daughterly.

VERA

Do you remember when you last saw me? You did not claim me as a daughter then.

BARON

[*Covers his eyes with his hand.*]

Do not recall it; it hurts too much.

VERA

I was in the dock.

BARON

It was horrible. I hated you for the devil of rebellion that had entered into your soul, but I thanked God when you escaped.

VERA

[*Softened.*]

I think I was more sorry for you than for myself. I hope, at least, no suspicion fell on you.

BARONESS

[*Eagerly.*]

But it did — an avalanche of suspicion. He is still buried under it. Vy else did they make Skovaloff Ambassador instead of him? Even now he risks everyting to see you again. Ah, *mon enfant*, you owe your fazer a grand reparation!

VERA

What reparation can I possibly make?

BARON

[*Passionately.*]

You can love me again, Vera.

BARONESS

[*Stamping foot.*]

Alexis, you are interrupting —

VERA

I fear, father, we have grown too estranged — our ideas are so opposite —

BARON

But not now, Vera, surely not now? You are no longer

[*He lowers his voice and looks around.*]

a Revolutionist?

VERA

Not with bombs, perhaps. I thank Heaven I was caught before I had done any *practical* work. But if you think I accept the order of things, you are mistaken. In Russia I fought against the autocracy —

BARON

Hush! Hush!

[*He looks round nervously.*]

VERA

Here I fight against the poverty. No, father, a woman who has once heard the call will always be a wild creature.

BARON

But

[*Lowering his voice.*]

those revolutionary Russian clubs here — you are not a member?

VERA

I do not believe in Revolutions carried on at a safe distance. I have found my life-work in America.

BARON

I am enchanted, Vera, enchanted.

BARONESS

[*Gushingly.*]

Permit me to kiss you, *belle enfant.*

VERA

I do not know you enough yet; I will kiss my father.

BARON

[*With a great cry of joy.*]

Vera!

[*He embraces her passionately.*]

At last! At last! I have found my little Vera again!

VERA

No, father, *your* Vera belongs to Russia with her mother and the happy days of childhood. But for their sakes —

[*She breaks down in emotion.*]

BARON

Ah, your poor mother!

BARONESS

[*Tartly.*]

Alexis, I perceive I am too many!

[*She begins to go toward the door.*]

BARON

No, no, Katusha. Vera will learn to love you, too.

VERA

[*To* BARONESS.]

What does my loving you matter? I can never return to Russia.

BARONESS

[*Pausing.*]

But ve can come here — often — ven you are married.

VERA

[*Surprised.*]

When I am married?

[*Softly blushing.*]

You know?

BARONESS

[*Smiling.*]

Ve know zat charming young man adores ze floor your foot treads on!

VERA

[*Blushing.*]

You have seen David?

BARON

[*Hoarsely.*]

David!

[*He clenches his fist.*]

BARONESS

[*Half aside, as much gestured as spoken.*]

Sh! Leave it to me.

[*Sweetly.*]

Oh, no, ve have not seen David.

VERA

[*Looking from one to the other.*]

Not seen — ? Then what — whom are you talking about?

BARONESS

About zat handsome, quite adoràhble Mr. Davenport.

VERA

Davenport!

BARONESS

Who combines ze manners of Europe viz ze millions of America!

VERA

[*Breaks into girlish laughter.*]

Ha! Ha! Ha! So Mr. Davenport has been talking to you! But you all seem to forget one small point — bigamy is not permitted even to millionnaires.

BARONESS

Ah, not boz at vonce, but —

VERA

And do you think I would take another woman's leavings? No, not even if she were dead.

BARONESS

You are insulting!

VERA

I beg your pardon — I wasn't even thinking of you. Father, to put an end at once to this absurd conversation, let me inform you I am already engaged.

BARON

[*Trembling, hoarse.*]

By name, David!

VERA

Yes, — David Quixano.

BARON

A Jew!

VERA

How did you know? Yes, he is a Jew, a noble Jew.

BARON

A Jew noble!

[*He laughs bitterly.*]

VERA

Yes — even as you esteem nobility — by pedigree. In Spain his ancestors were hidalgos, favourites at the Court of Ferdinand and Isabella; but in the great expulsion of 1492 they preferred exile in Poland to baptism.

BARON

And you, a Revendal, would mate with an unbaptized dog?

VERA

Dog! You call my husband a dog!

BARON

Husband! God in heaven — are you married already?

VERA

No! But not being unemployed millionnaires like Mr. Davenport, we hold even our troth eternal.

[*Calmer.*]

Our poverty, not your prejudice, stands in the way of our marriage. But David is a musician of genius, and some day —

BARONESS

A fiddler in a beer-hall! She prefers a fiddler to a millionnaire of ze first families of America!

VERA

[*Contemptuously.*]

First families! I told you David's family came to Poland in 1492 — some months before America was discovered.

BARON

Christ save us! You have become a Jewess!

VERA

No more than David has become a Christian. We were already at one — all honest people are. Surely, father, all religions must serve the same God — since there is only one God to serve.

BARONESS

But ze girl is an ateist!

BARON

Silence, Katusha! Leave me to deal with my daughter.

[*Changing tone to pathos, taking her face between his hands.*]

Oh, Vera, *Verotschka*, my dearest darling, I had sooner you had remained buried in Siberia than that —

[*He breaks down.*]

VERA

[*Touched, sitting beside him.*]

For you, father, I *was* as though buried in Siberia. Why did you come here to stab yourself afresh?

BARON

I wish to God I had come here earlier. I wish I had not been so nervous of Russian spies. Ah, *Verotschka*, if you only knew how I have pored over the newspaper pictures of you, and the reports of your life in this Settlement!

VERA

You asked me not to send letters.

BARON

I know, I know — and yet sometimes I felt as if I could risk Siberia myself to read your dear, dainty handwriting again.

VERA

[*Still more softened.*]

Father, if you love me so much, surely you will love David a little too — for my sake.

BARON

[*Dazed.*]

I — love — a Jew? Impossible.

[*He shudders.*]

VERA

[*Moving away, icily.*]

Then so is any love from me to you. You have chosen to come back into my life, and after our years of pain and separation I would gladly remember only my old childish affection. But not if you hate David. You must make your choice.

BARON

[*Pitifully.*]

Choice? I have no choice. Can I carry mountains? No more can I love a Jew.

[*He rises resolutely.*]

BARONESS

[*Who has turned away, fretting and fuming, turns back to her husband, clapping her hands.*]

Bravo!

VERA

[*Going to him again, coaxingly.*]

I don't ask you to carry mountains, but to drop the mountains you carry — the mountains of prejudice. Wait till you see him.

BARON

I will not see him.

VERA

Then you will hear him — he is going to make music for all the world. You can't escape him, *papasha*, you with your love of music, any more than you escaped Rubinstein.

BARONESS

Rubinstein vas not a Jew.

VERA

Rubinstein was a Jewish boy-genius, just like my David.

BARONESS

But his parents vere baptized soon after his birth. I had it from his patroness, ze Grand Duchess Helena Pavlovna.

VERA

And did the water outside change the blood within? Rubinstein was our Court pianist and was decorated by the Czar. And you, the Czar's servant, dare to say you could not meet a Rubinstein.

BARON

[*Wavering.*]

I did not say I could not meet a *Rubinstein.*

VERA

You practically said so. David will be even greater than Rubinstein. Come, father, I'll telephone for him; he is only round the corner.

BARONESS

[*Excitedly.*]

Ve vill not see him!

VERA

[*Ignoring her.*]

He shall bring his violin and play to you. There! You see, little father, you are already less frowning — now take that last wrinkle out of your forehead.

[*She caresses his forehead.*]

Never mind! David will smooth it out with his music as his Biblical ancestor smoothed that surly old Saul.

BARONESS

Ve vill not hear him!

BARON

Silence, Katusha! Oh, my little Vera, I little thought when I let you study music at Petersburg —

VERA

[*Smiling wheedlingly.*]

That I should marry a musician. But you see, little father, it all ends in music after all. Now I

will go and perform on the telephone, I'm not angel enough to bear one in here.

[*She goes toward the door of the hall, smiling happily.*]

BARON

[*With a last agonized cry of resistance.*]

Halt!

VERA

[*Turning, makes mock military salute.*]

Yes, *papasha.*

BARON

[*Overcome by her roguish smile.*]

You — I — he — do you love this J— this David so much?

VERA

[*Suddenly tragic.*]

It would kill me to give him up.

[*Resuming smile.*]

But don't let us talk of funerals on this happy day of sunshine and reunion.

[*She kisses her hand to him and exit toward the hall.*]

BARONESS

[*Angrily.*]

You are in her hands as vax!

BARON

She is the only child I have ever had, Katusha. Her baby arms curled round my neck; in her baby sorrows her wet face nestled against little father's.

[*He drops on a chair, and leans his head on the table.*]

BARONESS

[*Approaching tauntingly.*]

So you vill have a Jew son-in-law!

BARON

You don't know what it meant to me to feel her arms round me again.

BARONESS

And a hook-nosed brat to call you grandpapa, and nestle his greasy face against yours.

BARON

[*Banging his fist on the table.*]

Don't drive me mad!

[*His head drops again.*]

BARONESS

Then drive me home — I vill not meet him. . . . Alexis!

[*She taps him on the shoulder with her parasol. He does not move.*]

Alexis Ivanovitch! Do you not listen! . . .

[*She stamps her foot.*]

Zen I go to ze hotel alone.

[*She walks angrily toward the hall. Just before she reaches the door, it opens, and the servant ushers in* HERR PAPPELMEISTER *with his umbrella. The* BARONESS'S *tone changes instantly to a sugared society accent.*]

How do you do, Herr Pappelmeister?

[*She extends her hand, which he takes limply.*]

You don't remember me? *Non?*

[*Exit servant.*]

Ve vere with Mr. Quincy Davenport at Wiesbaden — ze Baroness Revendal.

PAPPELMEISTER

So!

[*He drops her hand.*]

BARONESS

Yes, it vas ze Baron's entousiasm for you zat got you your present position.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Arching his eyebrows.*]

So!

BARONESS

Yes — zere he is!

[*She turns toward the* BARON.]

Alexis, rouse yourself!

[*She taps him with her parasol.*]

Zis American air makes ze Baron so sleepy.

BARON

[*Rises dazedly and bows.*]

Charmed to meet you, Herr —

BARONESS

Pappelmeister! You remember ze great Pappelmeister.

BARON

[*Waking up, becomes keen.*]

Ah, yes, yes, charmed — why do you never bring your orchestra to Russia, Herr Pappelmeister?

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Surprised.*]

Russia? It never occurred to me to go to Russia — she seems so uncivilised.

BARONESS

[*Angry.*]

Uncivilised! Vy, ve have ze finest restaurants in ze vorld! And ze best telephones!

PAPPELMEISTER

So?

BARONESS

Yes — Russia is affrightfully misunderstood.

[*She sweeps away in burning indignation.* PAPPELMEISTER *murmurs in deprecation. Re-enter* VERA *from the hall. She is gay and happy.*]

VERA

He is coming round at once —

[*She utters a cry of pleased surprise.*]

Herr Pappelmeister! This is indeed a pleasure!

[*She gives* PAPPELMEISTER *her hand, which he kisses.*]

BARONESS

[*Sotto voce to the* BARON.]

Let us go before he comes.

[*The* BARON *ignores her, his eyes hungrily on* VERA.]

PAPPELMEISTER

[*To* VERA.]

But I come again — you have visitors.

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

Only my father and —

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Surprised.*]

Your fader? *Ach so!*

[*He taps his forehead.*]

Revendal!

BARONESS

[*Sotto voce to the* BARON.]

I vill not meet a Jew, I tell you.

PAPPELMEISTER

But you vill vant to talk to your fader, and all *I* vant is Mr. Quixano's address. De Irish girl at de house says de bird is flown.

VERA

[*Gravely.*]

I don't know if I ought to tell you where the new nest is —

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Disappointed.*]

Ach!

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

But I will produce the bird.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Looks round.*]

You vill broduce Mr. Quixano?

VERA

[*Merrily.*]

By clapping my hands.

[*Mysteriously.*]

I am a magician.

BARON

[*Whose eyes have been glued on* VERA.]

You are indeed! I don't know how you have bewitched me.

[*The* BARONESS *glares at him.*]

VERA

Dear little father!

[*She crosses to him and strokes his hair.*]

Herr Pappelmeister, tell father about Mr. Quixano's music.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Shaking his head.*]

Music cannot be talked about.

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

That's a nasty one for the critics. But tell father what a genius Da— Mr. Quixano is.

BARONESS

[*Desperately intervening.*]

Good-bye, Vera.

[*She thrusts out her hand, which* VERA *takes.*]

I have a headache. You muz excuse me. Herr Pappelmeister, *au plaisir de vous revoir.*

[PAPPELMEISTER *hastens to the door, which he holds open. The* BARONESS *turns and glares at the* BARON.]

BARON

[*Agitated.*]

Let me see you to the auto —

BARONESS

You could see me to ze hotel almost as quick.

BARON

[*To* VERA.]

I won't say good-bye, *Verotschka* — I shall be back.

[*He goes toward the hall, then turns.*]

You will keep him waiting?

[VERA *smiles lovingly.*]

BARONESS

You are keeping *me* vaiting.

[*He turns quickly. Exeunt* BARON *and* BARONESS.]

PAPPELMEISTER

And now broduce Mr. Quixano!

VERA

Not so fast. What are you going to do with him?

PAPPELMEISTER

Put him in my orchestra!

VERA

[*Ecstatic.*]

Oh, you dear!

[*Then her tone changes to disappointment.*]

But he won't go into Mr. Davenport's orchestra.

PAPPELMEISTER

It is no more Mr. Davenport's orchestra. He fired me, don't you remember? Now I boss — how say you in American?

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

Your own show.

PAPPELMEISTER

Ja, my own band. Ven I left dat comic opera millionnaire, dey all shtick to me almost to von man.

VERA

How nice of them!

PAPPELMEISTER

All egsept de Christian — he vas de von man. He — shtick to de millionnaire. So I lose my brincipal first violin.

VERA

And Mr. Quixano is to — oh, how delightful!

[*She claps her hands girlishly.*]

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Looks round mischievously.*]

Ach, de magic failed.

VERA

[*Puzzled.*]

Eh!

PAPPELMEISTER

You do not broduce him. You clap de hands — but you do not broduce him. Ha! Ha! Ha!

[*He breaks into a great roar of genial laughter.*]

VERA

[*Chiming in merrily.*]

Ha! Ha! Ha! But I said I have to know every thing first. Will he get a good salary?

PAPPELMEISTER

Enough to keep a vife and eight children!

VERA

[*Blushing.*]

But he hasn't a —

PAPPELMEISTER

No, but de Christian had — he get de same — I mean salary, ha! ha! ha! not children. Den he can be independent — vedder de fool-public like his American symphony or not — *nicht wahr?*

VERA

You *are* good to us —

[*Hastily correcting herself.*]

to Mr. Quixano.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Smiling.*]

And aldough you cannot broduce him, I broduce his symphony. *Was?*

VERA

Oh, Herr Pappelmeister! You are an angel.

PAPPELMEISTER

Nein, nein, mein liebes Kind! I fear I haf not de correct shape for an angel.

[*He laughs heartily. A knock at the door from the hall.*]

VERA

[*Merrily.*]

Now I clap my hands.

[*She claps.*]

Come!

[*The door opens.*]

Behold him!

[*She makes a conjurer's gesture.* DAVID, *bareheaded, carrying his fiddle, opens the door, and stands staring in amazement at* PAPPELMEISTER.]

DAVID

I thought you asked me to meet your father.

PAPPELMEISTER

She is a magician. She has changed us.

[*He waves his umbrella.*]

Hey presto, *was?* Ha! Ha! Ha!

[*He goes to* DAVID, *and shakes hands.*]

Und wie geht's? I hear you've left home.

DAVID

Yes, but I've such a bully cabin —

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Alarmed.*]

You are sailing avay?

VERA

[*Laughing.*]

No, no — that's only his way of describing his two-dollar-a-month garret.

DAVID

Yes — my state-room on the top deck!

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

Six foot square.

DAVID

But three other passengers aren't squeezed in, and it never pitches and tosses. It's heavenly.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Smiling.*]

And from heaven you flew down to blay in dat beer-hall. *Was?*

[DAVID *looks surprised.*]

I heard you.

DAVID

You! What on earth did you go *there* for?

PAPPELMEISTER

Vat on earth does one go to a beer-hall for? Ha! Ha! Ha! For vawter! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ven I hear you blay, I dink mit myself — if my blans succeed and I get Carnegie Hall for Saturday

Symphony Concerts, dat boy shall be one of my first violins. *Was?*

[*He slaps* DAVID *on the left shoulder.*]

DAVID

[*Overwhelmed, ecstatic, yet wincing a little at the slap on his wound.*]

Be one of your first —

[*Remembering.*]

Oh, but it is impossible.

VERA

[*Alarmed.*]

Mr. Quixano! You must not refuse.

DAVID

But does Herr Pappelmeister know about the wound in my shoulder?

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Agitated.*]

You haf been vounded?

DAVID

Only a legacy from Russia — but it twinges in some weathers.

PAPPELMEISTER

And de pain ubsets your blaying?

DAVID

Not so much the pain — it's all the dreadful memories —

VERA

[*Alarmed.*]

Don't talk of them.

DAVID

I *must* explain to Herr Pappelmeister — it wouldn't be fair. Even now

[*Shuddering.*]

there comes up before me the bleeding body of my mother, the cold, fiendish face of the Russian officer, supervising the slaughter —

VERA

Hush! Hush!

DAVID

[*Hysterically.*]

Oh, that butcher's face — there it is — hovering in the air, that narrow, fanatical forehead, that —

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Brings down his umbrella with a bang.*]

Schluss! No man ever dared break down under me. My baton will beat avay all dese faces and fancies. Out with your violin!

[*He taps his umbrella imperiously on the table.*]

Keinen Mut verlieren!

[DAVID *takes out his violin from its case and puts it to his shoulder,* PAPPELMEISTER *keeping up a hypnotic torrent of encouraging German cries.*]

Also! Fertig! Anfangen!

[*He raises and waves his umbrella like a baton.*]

Von, dwo, dree, four —

DAVID

[*With a great sigh of relief.*]

Thanks, thanks — they are gone already.

PAPPELMEISTER

Ha! Ha! Ha! You see. And ven ve blay your American symphony —

DAVID

[*Dazed.*]

You will play my American symphony?

VERA

[*Disappointed.*]

Don't you jump for joy?

DAVID

[*Still dazed but ecstatic.*]

Herr Pappelmeister!

[*Changing back to despondency.*]

But what certainty is there your Carnegie Hall audience would understand me? It would be the same smart set.

[*He drops dejectedly into a chair and lays down his violin.*]

PAPPELMEISTER

Ach, nein. Of course, some — ve can't keep peoble out merely because dey pay for deir seats. *Was?*

[*He laughs.*]

DAVID

It was always my dream to play it first to the new immigrants — those who have known the pain of the old world and the hope of the new.

PAPPELMEISTER

Try it on the dog. *Was?*

DAVID

Yes — on the dog that here will become a man!

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Shakes his head.*]

I fear neider dogs nor men are a musical breed.

DAVID

The immigrants will not understand my music with their brains or their ears, but with their hearts and their souls.

VERA

Well, then, why shouldn't it be done here — on our Roof-Garden?

DAVID

[*Jumping up.*]

A *Bas-Kôl!* A *Bas-Kôl!*

VERA

What *are* you talking ?

DAVID

Hebrew ! It means a voice from heaven.

VERA

Ah, but will Herr Pappelmeister consent ?

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Bowing.*]

Who can disobey a voice from heaven ? . . . But ven ?

VERA

On some holiday evening. . . . Why not the Fourth of July ?

DAVID

[*Still more ecstatic.*]

Another *Bas-Kôl !* . . . My American Symphony ! Played to the People ! Under God's sky ! On Independence Day ! With all the —

[*Waving his hand expressively, sighs voluptuously.*]

That will be too perfect.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Smiling.*]

Dat has to be seen. You must permit me to invite —

DAVID

[*In horror.*]

Not the musical critics!

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Raising both hands with umbrella in equal horror.*]

Gott bewahre! But I'd like to invite all de persons in New York who really undershtand music.

VERA

Splendid! But should we have room?

PAPPELMEISTER

Room? I vant four blaces.

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

You are severe! Mr. Davenport was right.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Smiling.*]

Perhaps de oders vill be out of town. *Also!*

[*Holding out his hand to* DAVID.]

You come to Carnegie to-morrow at eleven. Yes? *Fräulein.*

[*Kisses her hand.*]

Auf wiedersehen!

[*Going.*]

On de Roof-Garden — *nicht wahr?*

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

Wind and weather permitting.

PAPPELMEISTER

I haf alvays mein umbrella. *Was?* Ha! Ha! Ha!

VERA

[*Murmuring.*]

Isn't he a darling? Isn't he —?

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Pausing suddenly.*]

But ve never settled de salary.

DAVID

Salary!

[*He looks dazedly from one to the other.*]

For the honour of playing in your orchestra!

PAPPELMEISTER

Shylock!!. . . Never mind — ve settle de pound of flesh to-morrow. *Lebe wohl!*

[*Exit, the door closes.*]

VERA

[*Suddenly miserable.*]

How selfish of you, David!

DAVID

Selfish, Vera?

VERA

Yes — not to think of your salary. It looks as if you didn't really love me.

DAVID

Not love you? I don't understand.

VERA

[*Half in tears.*]

Just when I was so happy to think that now we shall be able to marry.

DAVID

Shall we? Marry? On my salary as first violin?

VERA

Not if you don't want to.

DAVID

Sweetheart! Can it be true? How do you know?

VERA

[*Smiling.*]

I'm not a Jew. I asked.

DAVID

My guardian angel!

[*Embracing her. He sits down, she lovingly at his feet.*]

VERA

[*Looking up at him.*]

Then you *do* care?

DAVID

What a question!

VERA

And you don't think wholly of your music and forget me?

DAVID

Why, you are behind all I write and play!

VERA

[*With jealous passion.*]

Behind? But I want to be before! I want you to love me first, before everything.

DAVID

I do put you before everything.

VERA

You are sure? And nothing shall part us?

DAVID

Not all the seven seas could part you and me.

VERA

And you won't grow tired of me — not even when you are world-famous — ?

DAVID

[*A shade petulant.*]

Sweetheart, considering I should owe it all to you —

VERA

[*Drawing his head down to her breast.*]

Oh, David! David! Don't be angry with poor little Vera if she doubts, if she wants to feel quite sure. You see father has talked so terribly, and after all I was brought up in the Greek Church, and we oughtn't to cause all this suffering unless —

DAVID

Those who love us *must* suffer, and *we* must suffer in their suffering. It is live things, not dead metals, that are being melted in the Crucible.

VERA

Still, we ought to soften the suffering as much as —

DAVID

Yes, but only Time can heal it.

VERA

[*With transition to happiness.*]

But father seems half-reconciled already! Dear little father, if only he were not so narrow about Holy Russia!

DAVID

If only my folks were not so narrow about Holy Judea! But the ideals of the fathers shall not be foisted on the children. Each generation must live and die for its own dream.

VERA

Yes, David, yes. You are the prophet of the living present. I am so happy.

[*She looks up wistfully.*]

You are happy, too?

DAVID

I am dazed — I cannot realise that all our troubles have melted away — it is so sudden.

VERA

You, David? Who always see everything in such rosy colours? Now that the whole horizon is one great splendid rose, you almost seem as if gazing out toward a blackness —

DAVID

We Jews are cheerful in gloom, mistrustful in joy. It is our tragic history —

VERA

But you have come to end the tragic history; to throw off the coils of the centuries.

DAVID

[*Smiling again.*]

Yes, yes, Vera. You bring back my sunnier self. I must be a pioneer on the lost road of happiness. To-day shall be all joy, all lyric ecstasy.

[*He takes up his violin.*]

Yes, I will make my old fiddle-strings *burst* with joy!

[*He dashes into a jubilant tarantella. After a few bars there is a knock at the door leading from the hall; their happy faces betray no sign of hearing it; then the door slightly opens, and* BARON REVENDAL'S *head looks hesitatingly in. As* DAVID *perceives it, his features work convulsively, his string breaks with a tragic snap, and he totters backward into* VERA'S *arms. Hoarsely.*]

The face! The face!

VERA

David — my dearest!

DAVID

[*His eyes closed, his violin clasped mechanically.*]

Don't be anxious — I shall be better soon — I oughtn't to have talked about it — the hallucination has never been so complete.

VERA

Don't speak — rest against Vera's heart — till it has passed away.

[*The* BARON *comes dazedly forward, half with a shocked sense of* VERA'S *impropriety, half to relieve her of her burden. She motions him back.*]

This is the work of your Holy Russia.

BARON

[*Harshly.*]

What is the matter with him?

[DAVID'S *violin and bow drop from his grasp and fall on the table.*]

DAVID

The voice!

[*He opens his eyes, stares frenziedly at the* BARON, *then struggles out of* VERA'S *arms.*]

VERA

[*Trying to stop him.*]

Dearest —

DAVID

Let me go.

[*He moves like a sleep-walker toward the paralysed* BARON, *puts out his hand, and testingly touches the face.*]

BARON

[*Shuddering back.*]

Hands off!

DAVID

[*With a great cry.*]

A-a-a-h! It is flesh and blood. No, it is stone — the man of stone! Monster!

[*He raises his hand frenziedly.*]

BARON

[*Whipping out his pistol.*]

Back, dog!

[VERA *darts between them with a shriek.*]

DAVID

[*Frozen again, surveying the pistol stonily.*]

Ha! You want *my* life, too. Is the cry not yet loud enough?

BARON

The cry?

DAVID

[*Mystically.*]

Can you not hear it? The voice of the blood of my brothers crying out against you from the ground? Oh, how can you bear not to turn that pistol against yourself and execute upon yourself the justice which Russia denies you?

BARON

Tush!

[*Pocketing the pistol a little shamefacedly.*]

VERA

Justice on himself? For what?

DAVID

For crimes beyond human penalty, for obscenities beyond human utterance, for —

VERA

You are raving.

DAVID

Would to heaven I were!

VERA

But this is my father.

DAVID

Your father! . . . God!

[*He staggers.*]

BARON

Come, Vera, I told you —

VERA

[*Frantically, shrinking back.*]

Don't touch me!

BARON

[*Starting back in amaze.*]

Vera!

VERA

[*Hoarsely.*]

Say it's not true.

BARON

What is not true?

VERA

What David said. It was the mob that massacred —*you* had no hand in it.

BARON

[*Sullenly.*]

I was there with my soldiers.

DAVID

[*Leaning, pale, against a chair, hisses*]

And you looked on with that cold face of hate — while my mother — my sister —

BARON

[*Sullenly.*]

I could not see everything.

DAVID

Now and again you ordered your soldiers to fire —

VERA

[*In joyous relief.*]

Ah, he *did* check the mob — he *did* tell his soldiers to fire.

DAVID

At any Jew who tried to defend himself.

VERA

Great God!

[*She falls on the sofa and buries her head on the cushion, moaning.*]

Is there no pity in heaven?

DAVID

There was no pity on earth.

BARON

It was the People avenging itself, Vera. The People rose like a flood. It had centuries of spoliation to wipe out. The voice of the People is the voice of God.

VERA

[*Moaning.*]

But you could have stopped them.

BARON

I had no orders to defend the foes of Christ

[*Crossing himself.*]

and the Czar. The People —

VERA

But you could have stopped them.

BARON

Who can stop a flood? I did my duty. A soldier's duty is not so pretty as a musician's.

VERA

But you could have stopped them.

BARON

[*Losing all patience.*]

Silence! You talk like an ignorant girl, blinded by passion. The *pogrom* is a holy crusade. Are we

Russians the first people to crush down the Jew? No — from the dawn of history the nations have had to stamp upon him — the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Babylonians, the Greeks, the Romans —

DAVID

Yes, it is true. Even Christianity did not invent hatred. But not till Holy Church arose were we burnt at the stake, and not till Holy Russia arose were our babes torn limb from limb. Oh, it is too much! Delivered from Egypt four thousand years ago, to be slaves to the Russian Pharaoh to-day.

[*He falls as if kneeling on a chair, and leans his head on the rail.*]

O God, shall we always be broken on the wheel of history? How long, O Lord, how long?

BARON

[*Savagely.*]

Till you are all stamped out, ground into your dirt.

[*Tenderly.*]

Look up, little Vera! You saw how *papasha* loves you — how he was ready to hold out his hand — and how this cur tried to bite it. Be calm — tell him a daughter of Russia cannot mate with dirt.

VERA

Father, I will be calm. I will speak without passion or blindness. I will tell David the truth. I was never absolutely sure of my love for him — perhaps that

was why I doubted his love for me — often after our enchanted moments there would come a nameless uneasiness, some vague instinct, relic of the long centuries of Jew-loathing, some strange shrinking from his Christless creed —

BARON

[*With an exultant cry.*]

Ah! She is a Revendal.

VERA

But now —

[*She rises, and walks firmly toward* DAVID.]

now, David, I come to you, and I say in the words of Ruth, thy people shall be my people and thy God my God!

[*She stretches out her hands to* DAVID.]

BARON

You shameless — !

[*He stops as he perceives* DAVID *remains impassive.*]

VERA

[*With agonised cry.*]

David!

DAVID

[*In low, icy tones.*]

You cannot come to me. There is a river of blood between us.

VERA

Were it seven seas, our love must cross them.

DAVID

Easy words to you. You never saw that red flood bearing the mangled breasts of women and the spattered brains of babes and sucklings. Oh!

[*He covers his eyes with his hands. The* BARON *turns away in gloomy impotence. At last* DAVID *begins to speak quietly, almost dreamily.*]

It was your Easter, and the air was full of holy bells and the streets of holy processions — priests in black and girls in white and waving palms and crucifixes, and everybody exchanging Easter eggs and kissing one another three times on the mouth in token of peace and good-will, and even the Jew-boy felt the spirit of love brooding over the earth, though he did not then know that this Christ, whom holy chants proclaimed re-risen, was born in the form of a brother Jew. And what added to the peace and holy joy was that our own Passover was shining before us. My mother had already made the raisin wine, and my greedy little brother Solomon had sipped it on the sly that very morning. We were all at home — all except my father — he was away in the little Synagogue at which he was cantor. Ah, such a voice he had — a voice of tears and thunder — when he prayed it was like a wounded soul beating at the gates of Heaven — but he sang even more beautifully in the ritual of

home, and how we were looking forward to his hymns at the Passover table —

[*He breaks down. The* BARON *has gradually turned round under the spell of* DAVID'S *story and now listens hypnotised.*]

I was playing my cracked little fiddle. Little Miriam was making her doll dance to it. Ah, that decrepit old china doll — the only one the poor child had ever had — I can see it now — one eye, no nose, half an arm. We were all laughing to see it caper to my music. . . . My father flies in through the door, desperately clasping to his breast the Holy Scroll. We cry out to him to explain, and then we see that in that beloved mouth of song there is no longer a tongue — only blood. He tries to bar the door — a mob breaks in — we dash out through the back into the street. There are the soldiers — and the Face —

[VERA'S *eyes involuntarily seek the face of her father, who shrinks away as their eyes meet.*]

VERA

[*In a low sob.*]

O God!

DAVID

When I came to myself, with a curious aching in my left shoulder, I saw lying beside me a strange shapeless Something —

[DAVID *points weirdly to the floor, and* VERA, *hunched forwards, gazes stonily at it, as if seeing the horror.*]

By the crimson doll in what seemed a hand I knew it must be little Miriam. The doll was a dream of beauty and perfection beside the mutilated mass which was all that remained of my sister, of my mother, of greedy little Solomon— Oh! You Christians can only see that rosy splendour on the horizon of happiness. And the Jew didn't see rosily enough for you, ha! ha! ha! the Jew who gropes in one great crimson mist.

[*He breaks down in spasmodic, ironic, long-drawn, terrible laughter.*]

VERA

[*Trying vainly to tranquillise him.*]

Hush, David! Your laughter hurts more than tears. Let Vera comfort you.

[*She kneels by his chair, tries to put her arms round him.*]

DAVID

[*Shuddering.*]

Take them away! Don't you feel the cold dead pushing between us?

VERA

[*Unfaltering, moving his face toward her lips.*]

Kiss me!

DAVID

I should feel the blood on my lips.

VERA

My love shall wipe it out.

DAVID

Love! Christian love!

[*He unwinds her clinging arms; she sinks prostrate on the floor as he rises.*]

For this I gave up my people — darkened the home that sheltered me — there was always a still, small voice at my heart calling me back, but I heeded nothing — only the voice of the butcher's daughter.

[*Brokenly.*]

Let me go home, let me go home.

[*He looks lingeringly at* VERA'S *prostrate form, but overcoming the instinct to touch and comfort her, begins tottering with uncertain pauses toward the door leading to the hall.*]

BARON

[*Extending his arms in relief and longing.*]

And here is *your* home, Vera!

[*He raises her gradually from the floor; she is dazed, but suddenly she becomes conscious of whose arms she is in, and utters a cry of repulsion.*]

VERA

Those arms reeking from that crimson river!

[*She falls back.*]

BARON

[*Sullenly.*]

Don't echo that babble. You came to these arms often enough when they were fresh from the battlefield.

VERA

But not from the shambles! You heard what he called you. Not soldier — butcher! Oh, I dared to dream of happiness after my nightmare of Siberia, but you — you —

[*She breaks down for the first time in hysterical sobs.*]

BARON

[*Brokenly.*]

Vera! Little Vera! Don't cry! You stab me!

VERA

You thought you were ordering your soldiers to fire at the Jews, but it was my heart they pierced.

She sobs on.]

BARON

. . . And my own. . . . But we will comfort each other. I will go to the Czar myself — with my forehead to the earth — to beg for your pardon! . . . Come, put your wet face to little father's. . . .

VERA

[*Violently pushing his face away.*]

I hate you! I curse the day I was born your daughter!

[*She staggers toward the door leading to the interior. At the same moment* DAVID, *who has reached the door leading to the hall, now feeling subconsciously that* VERA *is going and that his last reason for lingering on is removed, turns the door-handle. The click attracts the* BARON'S *attention, he veers round.*]

BARON

[*To* DAVID.]

Halt!

[DAVID *turns mechanically.* VERA *drifts out through her door, leaving the two men face to face. The* BARON *beckons to* DAVID, *who as if hypnotised moves nearer. The* BARON *whips out his pistol, slowly crosses to* DAVID, *who stands as if awaiting his fate. The* BARON *hands the pistol to* DAVID.]

You were right!

[*He steps back swiftly with a touch of stern heroism into the attitude of the culprit at a military execution, awaiting the bullet.*]

Shoot me!

DAVID

[*Takes the pistol mechanically, looks long and pensively at it as with a sense of its irrelevance. Gradually his arm droops and lets the pistol fall on the table, and there his hand touches a string of his violin, which yields a little note. Thus reminded of it, he picks up the violin, and as his fingers draw out the broken string he murmurs*]

I must get a new string.

[*He resumes his dragging march toward the door, repeating maunderingly*]

I must get a new string.

[*The curtain falls.*]

ACT IV

[*Saturday, July* 4, *evening. The Roof-Garden of the Settlement House, showing a beautiful, far-stretching panorama of New York, with its irregular sky-buildings on the left, and the harbour with its Statue of Liberty on the right. Everything is wet and gleaming after rain. Parapet at the back. Elevator on the right. Entrance from the stairs on the left. In the sky hang heavy clouds through which thin, golden lines of sunset are just beginning to labour.* DAVID *is discovered on a bench, hugging his violin case to his breast, gazing moodily at the sky. A muffled sound of applause comes up from below and continues with varying intensity through the early part of the scene. Through it comes the noise of the elevator ascending.* MENDEL *steps out and hurries forward.*]

MENDEL

Come down, David! Don't you hear them shouting for you?

[*He passes his hand over the wet bench.*]

Good heavens! You will get rheumatic fever!

DAVID

Why have you followed me?

MENDEL

Get up — everything is still damp.

DAVID

[*Rising, gloomily.*]

Yes, there's a damper over everything.

MENDEL

Nonsense — the rain hasn't damped your triumph in the least. In fact, the more delicate effects wouldn't have gone so well in the open air. Listen!

DAVID

Let them shout. Who told you I was up here?

MENDEL

Miss Revendal, of course.

DAVID

[*Agitated.*]

Miss Revendal? How should *she* know?

MENDEL

[*Sullenly.*]

She seems to understand your crazy ways.

DAVID

[*Passing his hand over his eyes.*]

Ah, *you* never understood me, uncle. . . . How did she look? Was she pale?

MENDEL

Never mind about Miss Revendal. Pappelmeister wants you — the people insist on seeing you. Nobody can quiet them.

DAVID

They saw me all through the symphony in my place in the orchestra.

MENDEL

They didn't know you were the composer. Now Miss Revendal has told them.

[*Louder applause.*]

There! Eleven minutes it has gone on — like for an office-seeker. You *must* come and show yourself.

DAVID

I won't — I'm not an office-seeker. Leave me to my misery.

MENDEL

Your misery? With all this glory and greatness opening before you? Wait till you're *my* age —

[*Shouts of* "QUIXANO!"]

You hear! What is to be done with them?

DAVID

Send somebody on the platform to remind them this is the interval for refreshments!

MENDEL

Don't be cynical. You know your dearest wish was to melt these simple souls with your music. And now —

DAVID

Now I have only made my own stony.

MENDEL

You are right. You are stone all over — ever since you came back home to us. Turned into a pillar of salt, mother says — like Lot's wife.

DAVID

That was the punishment for looking backward. Ah, uncle, there's more sense to that old Bible than the Rabbis suspect. Perhaps that is the secret of our people's paralysis — we are always looking backward.

[*He drops hopelessly into an iron garden-chair behind him.*]

MENDEL

[*Stopping him before he touches the seat.*]

Take care — it's sopping wet. You don't look backward enough.

[*He takes out his handkerchief and begins drying the chair.*]

DAVID

[*Faintly smiling.*]

I thought you wanted the salt to melt.

MENDEL

It *is* melting a little if you can smile. Do you know, David, I haven't seen you smile since that *Purim* afternoon?

DAVID

You haven't worn a false nose since, uncle.

[*He laughs bitterly.*]

Ha! Ha! Ha! Fancy masquerading in America because twenty-five centuries ago the Jews escaped a *pogrom* in Persia. Two thousand five hundred years ago! Aren't we uncanny?

[*He drops into the wiped chair.*]

MENDEL

[*Angrily.*]

Better you should leave us altogether than mock at us. I thought it was your Jewish heart that drove you back home to us; but if you are still hankering after Miss Revendal—

DAVID

[*Pained.*]

Uncle!

MENDEL

I'd rather see you marry her than go about like this. You couldn't make the house any gloomier.

DAVID

Go back to the concert, please. They have quieted down.

MENDEL

[*Hesitating.*]

And you?

DAVID

Oh, I'm not playing in the popular after-pieces. Pappelmeister guessed I'd be broken up with the stress of my own symphony — he has violins enough.

MENDEL

Then you don't want to carry this about.

[*Taking the violin from* DAVID'S *arms.*]

DAVID

[*Clinging to it.*]

Don't rob me of my music — it's all I have.

MENDEL

You'll spoil it in the wet. I'll take it home.

DAVID

No —

[*He suddenly catches sight of two figures entering from the left,* — FRAU QUIXANO *and* KATHLEEN *clad in their best, and wearing tiny American flags in honour of Independence Day.* KATHLEEN *escorts the old lady, with the air of a guardian angel, on her slow, tottering course toward* DAVID. FRAU QUIXANO *is puffing and panting after the many stairs.* DAVID *jumps up in surprise, releases the violin case to* MENDEL.]

They at my symphony!

MENDEL

Mother *would* come — even though, being *Shabbos*, she had to walk.

DAVID

But wasn't she shocked at my playing on the Sabbath?

MENDEL

No — that's the curious part of it. She said, even as a boy you played your fiddle on *Shabbos*, and if the Lord has stood it all these years, He must consider you an exception.

DAVID

You see! She's more sensible than you thought. I daresay whatever I had done she'd have considered me an exception.

MENDEL

[*In sullen acquiescence.*]

I suppose geniuses *are*.

KATHLEEN

[*Reaching them; panting with admiration and breathlessness.*]

Oh, Mr. David! it was like midnight mass! But the misthress was ashleep.

DAVID

Asleep!

[*Laughs half-merrily, half-sadly.*]

Ha! Ha! Ha!

FRAU QUIXANO

[*Panting and laughing in response.*]

He! He! He! *Dovidel lacht widder.* He! He! He!

[*She touches his arm affectionately, but feeling his wet coat utters a cry of horror.*]

Du bist nass!

DAVID

Es ist gor nicht, Mumme — my clothes are thick.

[*She fusses over him, wiping him down with her gloved hand.*]

MENDEL

But what brought you up here, Kathleen?

KATHLEEN

Sure, not the elevator. The misthress said 'twould be breaking the *Shabbos* to ride up in it.

DAVID

[*Uneasily.*]

But did — did Miss Revendal send you up?

KATHLEEN

And who else should be axin' the misthress if she wasn't proud of Mr. David? Faith, she's a sweet lady.

MENDEL

[*Impatiently.*]

Don't chatter, Kathleen.

KATHLEEN

But, Mr. Quixano —!

DAVID

[*Sweetly.*]

Please take your mistress down again — don't let her walk.

KATHLEEN

But *Shabbos* isn't out yet!

MENDEL

Chattering again!

DAVID

[*Gently.*]

There's no harm, Kathleen, in going *down* in the elevator.

KATHLEEN

Troth, I'll egshplain to her that dropping down isn't riding.

DAVID

[*Smiling.*]

Yes, tell her dropping down is natural — not *work*, like flying up.

[KATHLEEN *begins to move toward the stairs, explaining to* FRAU QUIXANO.]

And, Kathleen! You'll get her some refreshments.

KATHLEEN

[*Turns, glaring.*]

Refrishments, is it? Give her refrishments where they mix the mate with the butther-plates! Oh, Mr. David!

[*She moves off toward the stairs in reproachful sorrow.*]

MENDEL

[*Smiling.*]

I'll get her some coffee.

DAVID

[*Smiling.*]

Yes, that'll keep her awake. Besides, Pappelmeister was so sure the people wouldn't understand me, he's relaxing them on Gounod and Rossini.

MENDEL

Pappelmeister's idea of relaxation! *I* should have given them comic opera.

[*With sudden call to* KATHLEEN, *who with her mistress is at the wrong exit.*]

Kathleen! The elevator's *this* side!

KATHLEEN

[*Turning.*]

Sure, how can that be, when I came up *this* side?

MENDEL

You chatter too much.

[FRAU QUIXANO, *not understanding, exit.*]

Come this way. Can't you see the elevator?

KATHLEEN

[*Perceives* FRAU QUIXANO *has gone, calls after her in Irish-sounding Yiddish.*]

Wo geht Ihr, bedad? . . .

[*Impatiently.*]

Houly Moses, *komm' zurick!*

[*Exit anxiously, re-enter with* FRAU QUIXANO.]

Begorra, we Jews never know our way.

[MENDEL, *carrying the violin, escorts his mother and* KATHLEEN *to the elevator. When they are near it, it stops with a thud, and* PAPPELMEISTER *springs out, his umbrella up, meeting them face to face. He looks happy and beaming over* DAVID'S *triumph.*]

PAPPELMEISTER

[*In loud, joyous voice.*]

Nun, Frau Quixano, was sagen Sie? Vat you tink of your David?

FRAU QUIXANO

Dovid? Er ist meshuggah.

[*She taps her forehead.*]

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Puzzled, to* MENDEL.]

Meshuggah! Vat means *meshuggah?* Crazy?

MENDEL

[*Half-smiling.*]

You've struck it. She says David doesn't know enough to go in out of the rain.

[*General laughter.*]

DAVID

[*Rising.*]

But it's stopped raining, Herr Pappelmeister. You don't want your umbrella.

[*General laughter.*]

PAPPELMEISTER

So.

[*Shuts it down.*]

MENDEL

Herein, Mutter.

[*He pushes* FRAU QUIXANO'S *somewhat shrinking form into the elevator.* KATHLEEN *follows, then* MENDEL.]

Herr Pappelmeister, we are all your grateful servants.

[PAPPELMEISTER *bows; the gates close, the elevator descends.*]

DAVID

And you won't think *me* ungrateful for running away — you know my thanks are too deep to be spoken.

PAPPELMEISTER

And zo are my congratulations!

DAVID

Then, don't speak them, please.

PAPPELMEISTER

But you *must* come and speak to all de people in America who undershtand music.

DAVID

[*Half-smiling.*]

To your four connoisseurs?

[*Seriously.*]

Oh, please! I really could not meet strangers, especially musical vampires.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Half-startled, half-angry.*]

Vampires? Oh, come!

DAVID

Voluptuaries, then — rich, idle æsthetes to whom art and life have no connection, parasites who suck our music —

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Laughs good-naturedly.*]

Ha! Ha! Ha! Vait till you hear vat dey say.

DAVID

I will wait as long as you like.

PAPPELMEISTER

Den I like to tell you now.

[*He roars with mischievous laughter.*]

Ha! Ha! Ha! De first vampire says it is a great vork, but poorly performed.

DAVID

[*Indignant.*]

Oh!

PAPPELMEISTER

De second vampire says it is a poor vork, but greatly performed.

DAVID

[*Disappointed.*]

Oh!

PAPPELMEISTER

De dird vampire says it is a great vork greatly performed.

DAVID

[*Complacently.*]

Ah!

PAPPELMEISTER

And de fourz vampire says it is a poor vork poorly performed.

DAVID

[*Angry and disappointed.*]

Oh!

[*Then smiling.*]

You see you *have* to go to the people after all.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Shakes head, smiling.*]

Nein. Ven critics disagree — I agree mit mineself. Ha! Ha! Ha!

[*He slaps* DAVID *on the back.*]

A great vork dat vill be even better performed next time! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ten dousand congratulations.

[*He seizes* DAVID'S *hand, and grips it heartily.*]

DAVID

Don't! You hurt me.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Dropping* DAVID'S *hand, — misunderstanding.*]

Pardon! I forget your vound.

DAVID

No — no — what does my wound matter? That never stung half so much as these clappings and congratulations.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Puzzled but solicitous.*]

I knew your nerves vould be all shnapping like fiddle-strings. Oh, you cheniuses!

[*Smiling.*]

You like neider de clappings nor de criticisms, — *was?*

DAVID

They are equally — irrelevant. One has to wrestle with one's own art, one's own soul, *alone!*

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Patting him soothingly.*]

I am glad I did not let you blay in Part Two.

DAVID

Dear Herr Pappelmeister! Don't think I don't appreciate all your kindnesses — you are almost a father to me.

PAPPELMEISTER

And you disobey me like a son. Ha! Ha! Ha! Vell, I vill make your excuses to de—vampires. Ha! Ha! *Also*, David.

[*He lays his hand again affectionately on his right shoulder.*]

Lebe wohl! I must go down to my popular classics.

[*Gloomily.*]

Truly a going down! *Was?*

DAVID

[*Smiling.*]

Oh, it isn't such a descent as all that. Uncle said you ought to have given them comic opera.

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Shuddering convulsively.*]

Comic opera. . . . Ouf!

[*He goes toward the elevator and rings the bell. Then he turns to* DAVID.]

Vat vas dat vord, David?

DAVID

What word?

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Groping for it.*]

Mega—megasshu . . .

DAVID

[*Puzzled.*]

Megasshu?

[*The elevator comes up; the gates open.*]

PAPPELMEISTER

Megusshah! You know.

[*He taps his forehead with his umbrella.*]

DAVID

Ah, *meshuggah!*

PAPPELMEISTER

[*Joyously.*]

Ja, meshuggah!

[*He gives a great roar of laughter.*]

Ha! Ha! Ha!

[*He waves umbrella at* DAVID.]

Well, don't be . . . *meshuggah.*

[*He steps into the elevator.*]

Ha! Ha! Ha!

[*The gates close, and it descends with his laughter.*]

DAVID

[*After a pause.*]

Perhaps I *am* . . . *meshuggah.*

[*He walks up and down moodily, approaches the parapet at back.*]

Dropping down is indeed natural.

[*He looks over.*]

How it tugs and drags at one!

[*He moves back resolutely and shakes his head.*]

That would be even a greater descent than Pappelmeister's to comic opera. One *must* fly upward — somehow.

[*He drops on the chair that* MENDEL *dried. A faint music steals up and makes an accompaniment to all the rest of the scene.*]

Ah! the popular classics!

[*His head sinks on a little table. The elevator comes up again, but he does not raise his head.* VERA, *pale and sad, steps out and walks gently over to him; stands looking at him with maternal pity; then decides not to disturb him and is stealing away when suddenly he looks up and perceives her and springs to his feet with a dazed glad cry.*]

Vera!

VERA

[*Turns, speaks with grave dignity.*]

Miss Andrews has charged me to convey to you the heart-felt thanks and congratulations of the Settlement.

DAVID

[*Frozen.*]

Miss Andrews is very kind. . . . I trust you are well.

VERA

Thank you, Mr. Quixano. Very well and very busy. So you'll excuse me.

[*She turns to go.*]

DAVID

Certainly. . . . How are your folks?

VERA

[*Turns her head.*]

They are gone back to Russia. And yours?

DAVID

You just saw them all.

VERA

[*Confused.*]

Yes — yes — of course — I forgot! Good-bye, Mr. Quixano.

DAVID

Good-bye, Miss Revendal.

[*He drops back on the bench.* VERA *walks to the elevator, then just before ringing turns again.*]

VERA

I shouldn't advise you to sit here in the damp.

DAVID

My uncle dried the chair.

[*Bitterly.*]

Curious how every one is concerned about my body and no one about my soul.

VERA

Because your soul is so much stronger than your body. Why, think! It has just lifted a thousand people far higher than this roof-garden.

DAVID

Please don't you congratulate me, too! That would be too ironical.

VERA

[*Agitated, coming nearer.*]

Irony, Mr. Quixano? Please, please, do not imagine there is any irony in my congratulations.

DAVID

The irony is in all the congratulations. How can I endure them when I know what a terrible failure I have made!

VERA

Failure! Because the critics are all divided? That is the surest proof of success. You have produced something real and new.

DAVID

I am not thinking of Pappelmeister's connoisseurs. —*I* am the only connoisseur, the only one who knows. And every bar of my music cried "Failure! Failure!" It shrieked from the violins, blared from the trombones, thundered from the drums. It was written on all the faces —

VERA

[*Vehemently, coming still nearer.*]

Oh, no! no! I watched the faces — those faces of toil and sorrow, those faces from many lands. They were fired by your vision of their coming brotherhood, lulled by your dream of their land of rest. And I could see that you were right in speaking to the people. In some strange, beautiful way the inner meaning of your music stole into all those simple souls —

DAVID

[*Springing up.*]

And *my* soul? What of *my* soul? False to its own music, its own mission, its own dream. That is what I mean by failure, Vera. I preached of God's Crucible, this great new continent that could melt up all race-differences and vendettas, that could purge and re-create, and God tried me with his supremest test. He gave me a heritage from the Old World, hate and vengeance and blood, and said, "Cast it all into my Crucible." And I said, "Even thy Crucible cannot melt this hate, cannot drink up this blood." And so I sat crooning over the dead past, gloating over the old blood-stains — I, the apostle of America, the prophet of the God of our children. Oh — how my music mocked me! And you — so fearless, so high above fate — how you must despise me!

VERA

I? Ah no!

DAVID

You must. You do. Your words still sting. Were it seven seas between us, you said, our love must cross them. And I — I who had prated of seven seas —

VERA

Not seas of blood — I spoke selfishly, thoughtlessly. I had not realised that crimson flood. Now I see it day and night. O God!

[*She shudders and covers her eyes.*]

DAVID

There lies my failure — to have brought it to your eyes, instead of blotting it from my own.

VERA

No man could have blotted it out.

DAVID

Yes — by faith in the Crucible. From the blood of battlefields spring daisies and buttercups. In the divine chemistry the very garbage turns to roses. But in the supreme moment my faith was found wanting. You came to me — and I thrust you away.

VERA

I ought not to have come to you. . . . I ought not to have come to you to-day. We must not meet again.

DAVID

Ah, you cannot forgive me!

VERA

Forgive? It is I that should go down on my knees for my father's sin.

[*She is half-sinking to her knees. He stops her by a gesture and a cry.*]

DAVID

No! The sins of the fathers shall not be visited on the children.

VERA

My brain follows you, but not my heart. It is heavy with the sense of unpaid debts — debts that can only cry for forgiveness.

DAVID

You owe me nothing —

VERA

But my father, my people, my country. . . .

[*She breaks down. Recovers herself.*]

My only consolation is, you need nothing.

DAVID

[*Dazed.*]

I — need — nothing?

VERA

Nothing but your music . . . your dreams.

DAVID

And your love? Do I not need that?

VERA

[*Shaking her head sadly.*]

No.

DAVID

You say that because I have forfeited it.

VERA

It is my only consolation, I tell you, that you do not need me. In our happiest moments a suspicion of this truth used to lacerate me. But now it is my one comfort in the doom that divides us. See how you stand up here above the world, alone and self-sufficient. No woman could ever have more than the second place in your life.

DAVID

But you have the *first* place, Vera!

VERA

[*Shakes her head again.*]

No — I no longer even desire it. I have gotten over that womanly weakness.

DAVID

You torture me. What do you mean?

VERA

What can be simpler? I used to be jealous of your music, your prophetic visions. I wanted to come first — before them all! Now, dear David, I only pray that they may fill your life to the brim.

DAVID

But they cannot.

VERA

They will — have faith in yourself, in your mission — good-bye.

DAVID

[*Dazed.*]

You love me and you leave me?

VERA

What else can I do? Shall the shadow of Kishineff hang over all your years to come? Shall I kiss you and leave blood upon your lips, cling to you and be pushed away by all those cold, dead hands?

DAVID

[*Taking both her hands.*]

Yes, cling to me, despite them all, cling to me till all these ghosts are exorcised, cling to me till our love triumphs over death. Kiss me, kiss me now.

VERA

[*Resisting, drawing back.*]

I dare not! It will make you remember.

DAVID

It will make me forget. Kiss me.

[*There is a pause of hesitation, filled up by the Cathedral music from Faust surging up softly from below.*]

VERA

[*Slowly.*]

I will kiss you as we Russians kiss at Easter — the three kisses of peace.

[*She kisses him three times on the mouth as in ritual solemnity.*]

DAVID

[*Very calmly.*]

Easter was the date of the massacre — see! I am at peace.

VERA

God grant it endure!

[*They stand quietly hand in hand.*]

Look! How beautiful the sunset is after the storm!

[DAVID *turns. The sunset, which has begun to grow beautiful just after* VERA'S *entrance, has now reached its most magnificent moment; below there are narrow lines of saffron and pale gold, but above the whole sky is one glory of burning flame.*]

DAVID

[*Prophetically exalted by the spectacle.*]

It is the fires of God round His Crucible.

[*He drops her hand and points downward.*]

There she lies, the great Melting-Pot — listen! Can't you hear the roaring and the bubbling? There gapes her mouth

[*He points east.*]

— the harbour where a thousand mammoth feeders come from the ends of the world to pour in their human freight. Ah, what a stirring and a seething! Celt and Latin, Slav and Teuton, Greek and Syrian, — black and yellow —

VERA

[*Softly, nestling to him.*]

Jew and Gentile —

DAVID

Yes, East and West, and North and South, the palm and the pine, the pole and the equator, the crescent and the cross — how the great Alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame! Here shall they all unite to build the Republic of Man and the Kingdom of God. Ah, Vera, what is the glory of Rome and Jerusalem where all nations and races come to worship and look back, compared with the glory of America, where all races and nations come to labour and look forward!

[*He raises his hands in benediction over the shining city.*]

Peace, peace, to all ye unborn millions, fated to fill this giant continent — the God of our *children* give you Peace.

[*An instant's solemn pause. The sunset is swiftly fading, and the vast panorama is suffused with a more restful twilight, to which the many-gleaming lights of the town add*

the tender poetry of the night. Far back, like a lonely, guiding star, twinkles over the darkening water the torch of the Statue of Liberty. From below comes up the softened sound of voices and instruments joining in "My Country, 'tis of Thee." The curtain falls slowly.]

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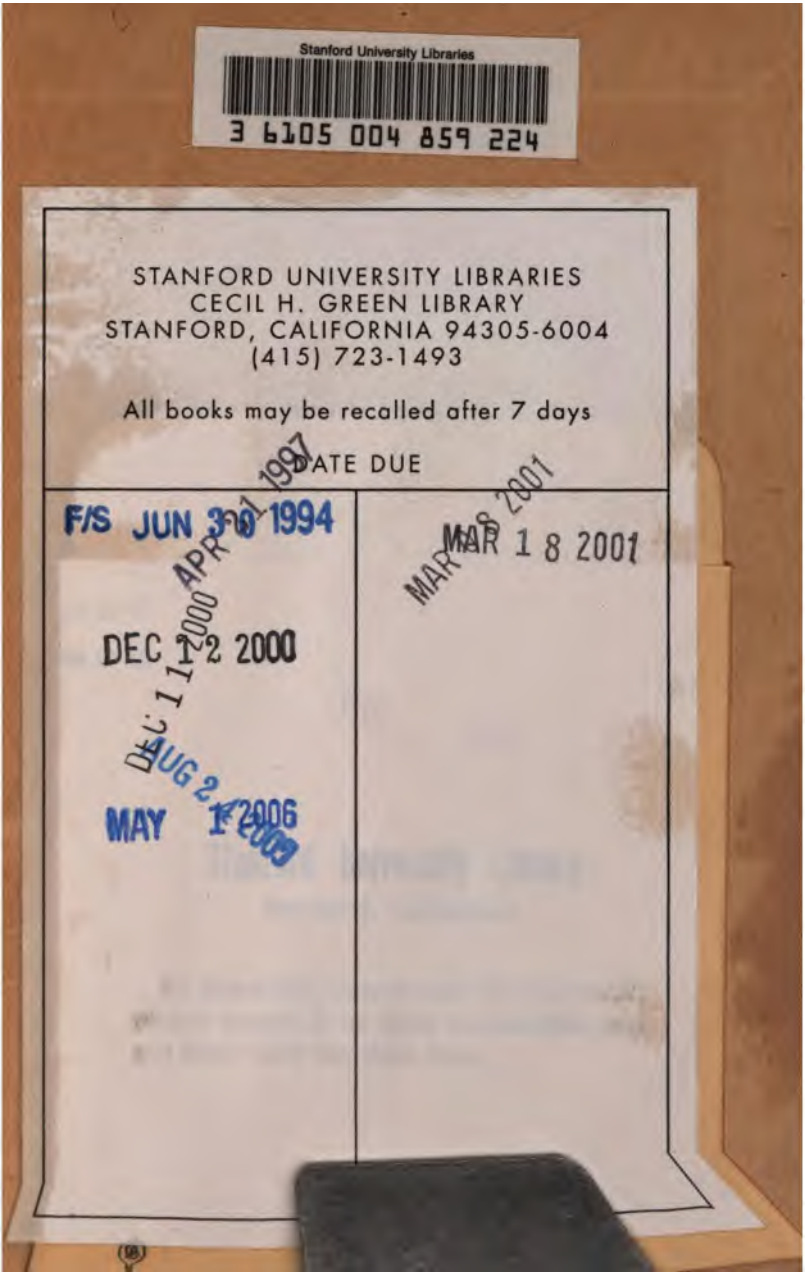
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